

CHÂTEAU DE CHENONCEAU

History, Architecture and Gardens



The soul of Orpheus, a gentle rustling of trees and water, still lulls visitors at Chenonceau

The very name of this site evokes music; the vision of it, pure enchantment. Beauty, order and architecture have created a pure and simple harmony. Here, charm transcends beauty. Who would rather seduce than captivate? Perhaps those who construct massive buildings, heartless ones. The women of Chenonceau made other choices, love was their *raison d'être*. The majesty and simplicity of Chenonceau touches the heart and soul. Chenonceau "is enclosed in this vibrant mirror, as we imagine angels and reflections to be." These inspired words seem to suggest that the Cher itself was Guillaume Apollinaire's inkwell. Rhythm and melody have become one in the very architecture of the building; the arches form ethereal scrolls winding over the water.

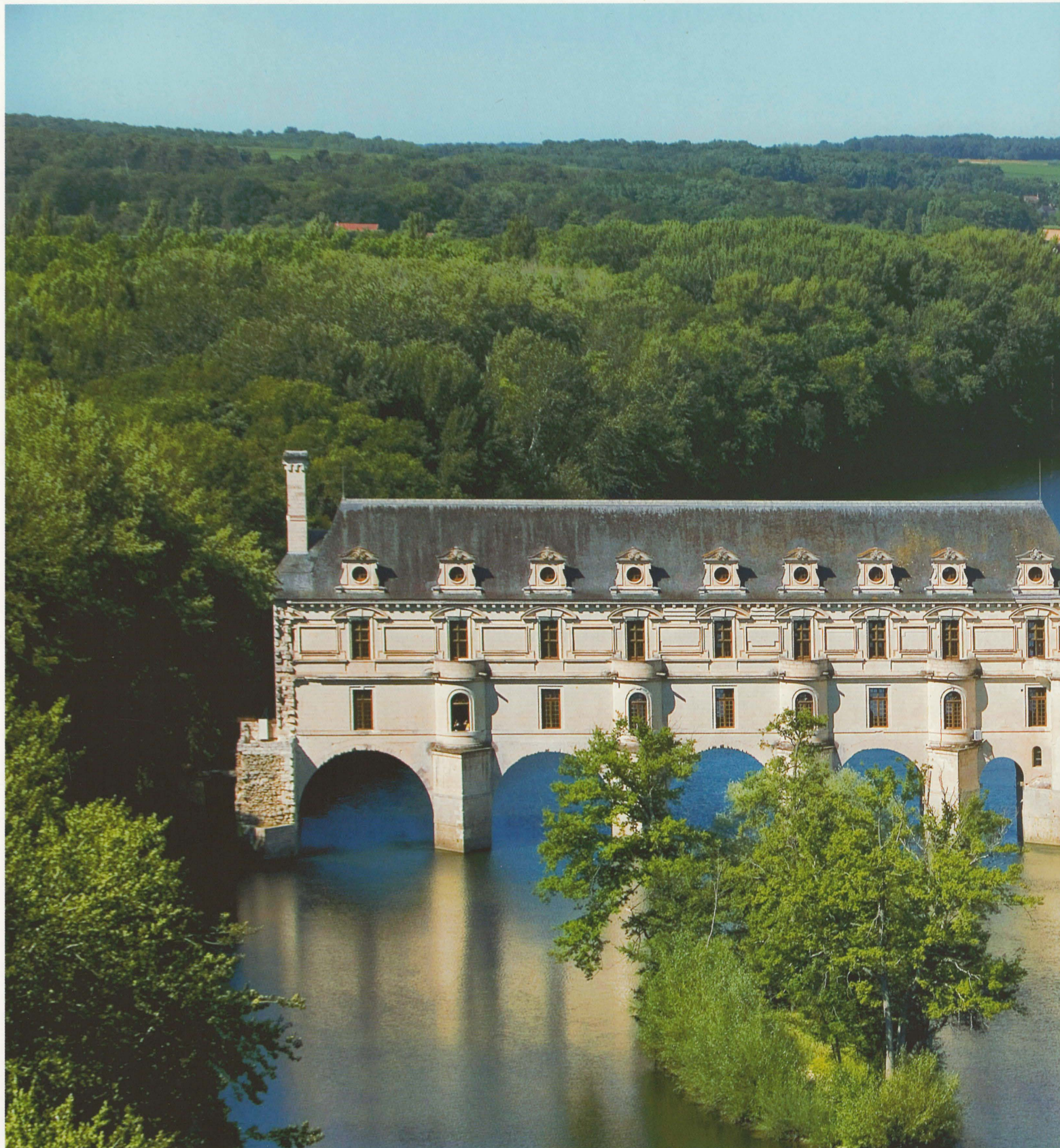
Chenonceau is as light as a bird between the earth and the sky. Intensity and expansiveness are intertwined at Chenonceau in an architectural metaphor of mankind's work and the infinity of the skies. Chenonceau: the name evokes both oak (*chêne* in French) and reed (*roseau*). Chenonceau: a theater of greenery for a concert of birdsong. Grace is infinite; contemplate it here, savor its delights, listen with all your heart. Dear visitors, benevolent friends of beauty, welcome to this house of joy, and may your joy continue long after you leave.

LAURE MENIER, CURATOR

Contents

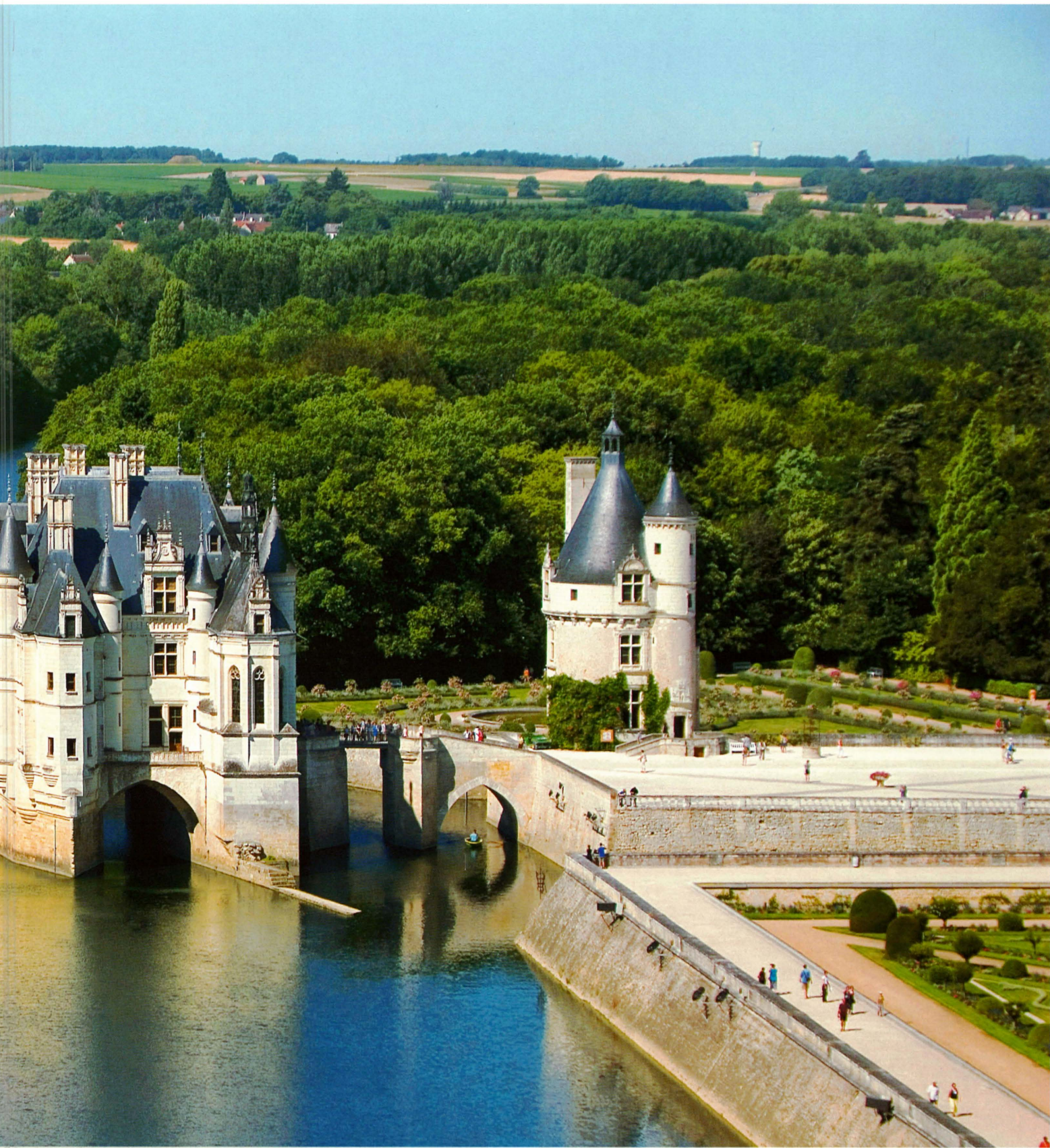
- 4 Chenonceau: Six centuries of remarkable history
- 20 An architectural gem from the French Renaissance
- 30 Portfolio. The masterpieces
- 41 Introduction and tour of the château
- 60 Gardens: an ideal landscape architecture
- 72 Contemporary art exhibitions
- 74 Visiting Chenonceau

OPPOSITE
Main avenue framed by
two sphinxes, leading to
the château entrance.



Chenonceau: Six centuries

The château has been a coveted prize for its successive owners, all swept up in the



of remarkable history

turmoil of French history. An overview of the main events.

TEN KEY DATES

Decisive dates in Chenonceau's history

FRÉDÉRIC DELAHAYE

Historian

The Marques Tower is the only remaining vestige on the first château at Chenonceau, standing on the eponymous terrace. Opposite was the mill, with its foundations in the Cher River, the site of the future château.



1411 Destruction of the first Château des Marques

Autumn 1411. During the Hundred Years' War, Jean Marques I, lord of Chenonceau, chose to support the Duc de Bourgogne and the English, enemies of the Armagnac party and of King Charles VII. It was an unfortunate decision, and judgment was swift. Once the English had been driven out, Jean was sentenced as a traitor to his king and punished severely. His two chateaux, Chenonceau and Houdes, were burned down and his forests cut to the height of infamy (the height of a man). The destruction of the forest, a major source of income, marked the start of the Marques family's ruin. Finally, on April 3, 1432, Charles VII pardoned Jean Marques' son. The war against the English was ongoing; the king needed military support and therefore had to make concessions, but the seigneurie of Chenonceau had lost its strategic position on the Cher River and was far from the battlefield.

1513 Bohier's conspicuous success

In 1494, the misfortune of the Marques was beneficial to Thomas Bohier, the king's Lieutenant general. It took twenty long and difficult years before the royal treasurer acquired Chenonceau. He used subterfuge and frontmen to acquire the land, and constantly pressured the Marques family to pay their debts so he could evict them. On February 17, 1512, Chenonceau finally became the ideal place to showcase the success of the Bohier couple.

In 1515, Thomas was fighting alongside King François I during the battle of Marignan. The king then appointed him tax collector for the newly acquired Duchy of Milan. Thomas earned a fortune and acquired a taste for Renaissance art, while encouraging the ambitions of his wife Katherine Briçonnet with artistic and financial support. On learning of Thomas' abuse of power as viceroy of Naples, François I decided, in 1535, to reclaim his due, and demanded that the Bohier heirs repay their debts to the crown. Diane de Poitiers suggested that her royal lover acquire Chenonceau.



1547 Henri II gives Chenonceau to Diane de Poitiers

Antoine Bohier, Thomas' son, was in desperate straits. François I was demanding that he repay his father's debts, a sum of 190,000 *livres tournois*, to fill the state coffers drained by the Italian wars. He had to concede the Chenonceau and Houdes properties to the king. But he was finally ruined when Diane de Poitiers stopped this transaction, as she wanted to be the sole owner of this prized château, and have it separated from the royal domain. She therefore had to purchase Chenonceau legally, which she managed to do in June 1547. Henri II used a letters patent to grant his mistress "all rights of ownership and possession, in full and in perpetuity, to dispose of as she see fits and as an inheritance," as the chatelain of Chenonceau. In 1550, Antoine Bohier, under attack on all sides, fled to Venice, far from any royal influence. He only returned in 1556, under force, to ratify the sale.

1559 Catherine de Médicis flees the Amboise conspiracy for Chenonceau

Henri II died on July 10, 1559, leaving Catherine de Médicis a widow. Diane de Poitiers was quickly pushed aside. The tensions between the Catholic and Protestant parties were leading to civil war. On March 17, 1560, with the support of a number of Protestants, Lord Godefroy de Barry de La Renaudie removed the young King François II and his queen, Marie Stuart, from what he deemed the harmful influence of Catherine de Médicis. This was the start of the Amboise conspiracy. The plot was exposed and crushed severely. The conspirators were hanged on the balcony of the Château d'Amboise. Fleeing the noxious air of Amboise, Catherine moved the young king to Chenonceau, where he enjoyed the festivities, while she ran the kingdom from the Green Study.

Henri Sauvage

Portrait of Catherine de Médicis

1901, oil on canvas, 145 x 117.5 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Diane de Poitiers' bedroom. © Stevens Frémont.

Jean Clouet

Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois.

Ca 1525. Collection Catherine de Médicis. 29.1 x 20.9 cm. Coll. musée Condé, Chantilly. © RMN (domaine de Chantilly) / René-Gabriel Ojéda.



King Henri III’s final thoughts were for his queen, Louise de Lorraine: “Mamye, pray to God for me and do not leave this place.”



François Clouet
Louise de Lorraine
Drawing from *Portraits dessinés de la Cour de France*
16th century. Coll. & © BnF, Paris.
Louise de Lorraine devoted her life to good works, reading and prayer. With her death in 1601, Chenonceau lost its last royal resident.

1589 An act of faith: Louise de Lorraine goes into seclusion after the death of Henri III

On August 1, 1589, the Catholic fanatic Jacques Clément fatally stabbed Henri III. The king’s final thoughts were for his queen, Louise de Lorraine: “Mamye, I hope I will be very well; pray to God for me and do not leave this place.” Louise received the message at Chenonceau, and took his last wishes to heart. As an act of faith, she entered formal mourning at the château, which she had inherited from Catherine de Médicis. Forgotten by all, she struggled to maintain a lifestyle worthy of a dowager queen. She wrote several times to Henri IV, requesting that he remove the troop of soldiers camped on her property and send her the queen’s pension. Circumstances were not kind to the widow. Henri IV was devoting his energy to securing his position in the kingdom, and the pleas from Louise to find the murderers of Henri III were viewed as motives for reviving the religious conflicts.

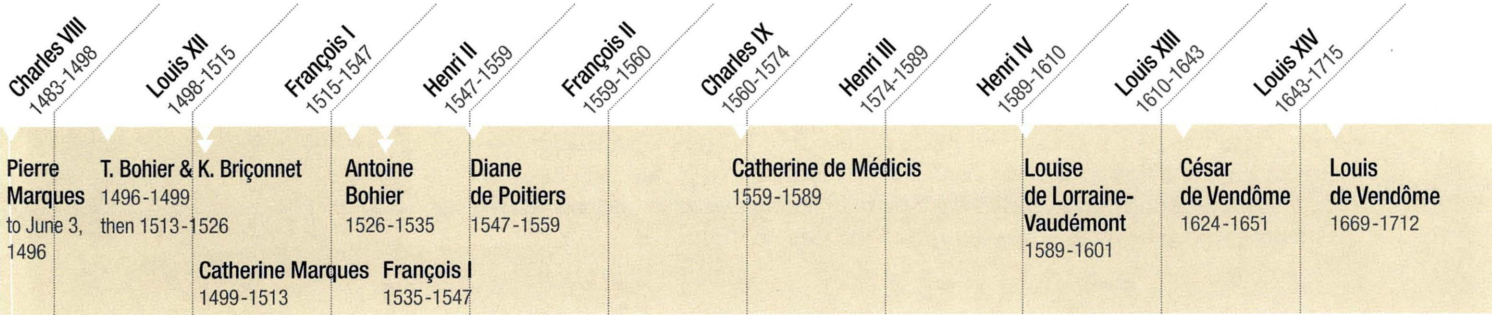
1598 Chenonceau at the heart of the Edict of Nantes

There was only one remaining obstacle to religious peace in France: the last of the Catholic League leaders, Philippe-Emmanuel de Lorraine, Duc de Mercœur and brother of the dowager queen Louise de Lorraine. The duke sent his wife, Marie de Luxembourg, to negotiate his surrender to Henri IV, but the king refused. The Duchesse de Penthièvre then turned to the king’s favorite, Gabrielle d’Estrées, with whom she was arranging the marriage of her only daughter Françoise to César de Vendôme, the legitimate son of the king and Gabrielle d’Estrées. The contract was signed on March 28, 1598, one month prior to the Edict of Nantes. Louise de Lorraine offered Chenonceau as a wedding gift, but César de Vendôme would not acquire the property until 1624 (see page 56).

1733 Louise Dupin, delightful spirit of the Enlightenment

Claude Dupin purchased Chenonceau from Louis IV Henri de Bourbon Condé, a descendant of César de Vendôme. His wife Louise brought life and festivities back to the château. In the midst of the inspiring new ideas of the Enlightenment, she surrounded herself with “all the writers, academicians and beautiful women,” as she liked to say to Jean-Jacques Rousseau. The Hôtel Lambert in

CHRONOLOGY OF THE FRENCH KINGS AND THE SUCCESSIVE OWNERS OF CHENONCEAU





Paris, like Chenonceau, hosted a fashionable literary salon. These evenings may have included a reading of Voltaire's most recent work or the latest pamphlet against intolerance. But a passion for letters did not alter Rousseau's heart, and the philosopher dreamed of an impossible relationship with Mme Dupin. Aware he had been presumptuous, he acknowledged that "Madame Dupin, the most beautiful of the three sisters, is the only one never to have been accused of inconsistency in her behavior." He sent two letters of apology to Mme Dupin. On her death, her great-nephew René Vallet de Villeneuve inherited the château.

Louise-Émile Leleux

Reading of the Engagement téméraire

19th century, oil on wood, 41 x 32.5 cm. Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montmorency.

The painter depicted Rousseau reading *L'Engagement Téméraire* to Mme Dupin in one of the château's sitting rooms, autumn 1747.

Louis XV
1715-1774

Louis XVI
1774-1792

French Revolution
1789-1799

Consulat
1799-1804

Napoleon I
1804-1814-1815

Restauration
1814-1830

July Monarchy
1830-1848

Second Republic
1848-1852

Second Empire
1852-1870

Third Republic
1870-1914

Mme Louise Dupin 1733-1799

René Vallet de Villeneuve
1799-1863

Comte
de Villeneuve
1863-1864

Mme Pelouze
1864-1888

Famille
Menier
Since 1913



1869 Marguerite Pelouze: The triumph of a nineteenth-century bourgeoisie

Mme Pelouze, the daughter of a bourgeois industrialist, decided in 1864 to make Chenonceau a showcase for her success. She purchased the property from Villeneuve for 850,000 francs, then spent millions restoring it to its condition during Diane de Poitiers' era. One day, her brother, an idle bourgeois, decided to enter politics, and in 1869 became a *député*. In 1881 he married the daughter of the French president, Jules Grévy. Overcome with debt, the brother took advantage of his status to sell medals and decorations, including the Legion of Honor. The "decorations scandal" erupted in 1887, resulting in Grévy's resignation as well as the downfall of Mme Pelouze. She was forced to sell the château in 1888 to the Crédit Foncier, the French national mortgage bank. Henri Menier purchased the château in 1913.

The lower gallery was transformed into a military hospital during World War I. More than 2,000 wounded were treated here.

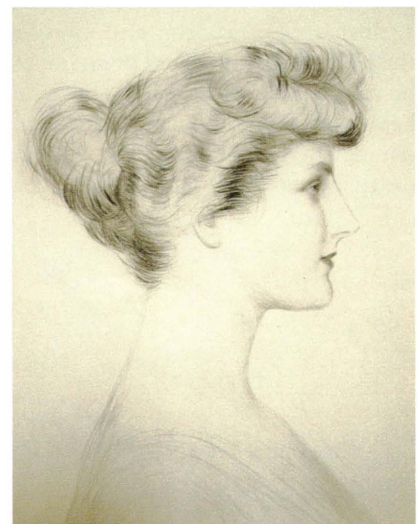
1914-1918 The Gallery becomes a military hospital

Chenonceau was far from the front lines, but it was closely linked to the war effort. Gaston Menier, who became owner of the château on the death of his brother Henri, set up a 120-bed hospital and surgical facility in the two galleries. He installed running water and electricity to improve the living conditions. Gaston paid for all the operating costs here, as well as at Noisiel, the headquarters of the Menier chocolate factory where he had created a second hospital. Doctor Morel and his nurses treated 2,254 wounded soldiers; to relieve their boredom, they used to taunt the fish in the river below from their sickbeds. On December 31, 1918, the last wounded soldier left the château.

Simone Menier, chief nurse, ran the hospital set up in the château's two galleries with her husband Georges.

1939-1945 Chenonceau straddles the line of demarcation

On June 22, 1940, France lost a decisive battle that would have catastrophic consequences. The country was cut in two by an impassable border, the line of demarcation. The gallery led to the free zone. The Menier family, owners of the château, helped villagers and Jews escape to the south. German patrols watched the river, patrolling the moats at regular intervals, though without managing to block the passage to freedom. The curator had the keys to open the gallery, letting refugees pass through once the coast was clear.

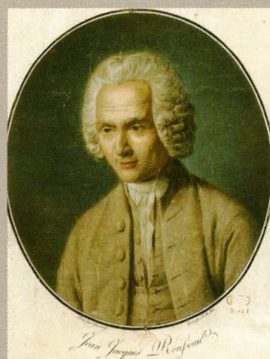


Writers and Chenonceau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau,
Les Confessions, 1769-1770

The tutor in love

"When I saw her for the first time, she was still one of the finest women in Paris. She received me at her toilette. Her arms were uncovered, her hair disheveled and her peignoir poorly arranged. This scene was new to me; my poor head could not take it in: I became confused, my senses wandered. In short, I was totally smitten by Madame Dupin. My confusion did not seem to matter to her; she did not even notice it. She kindly received the book and the author, spoke to me knowledgeably about my project ... kept me for dinner, placed me by her side at the table. It would have taken less than this to drive me mad; and so it did."

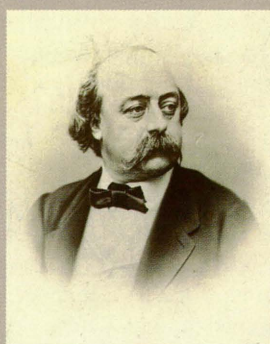


Etching after Jean-François Garnerais
Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Hand-colored etching. Coll. & © BnF, Paris.

Flaubert, *Voyage en Bretagne : Par les champs et par les grèves, 1847*

Tourism on the road to Brittany

"You enter through a hall with rib vaults, which was the former guards' room, and where, despite the difficulty of this type of arrangement, the few pieces of armor placed here seem to fit well. Indeed, everywhere, the period tapestries and furnishings have been intelligently preserved. The venerable sixteenth-century fireplaces do not have, under their mantelpiece, the ignoble and cheap Prussian-style stoves placed inside less majestic ones. In the kitchens set up in one of the château's arches, a servant was peeling vegetables, a kitchen boy was washing plates and, standing at the stove, the chef was stirring a reasonable number of gleaming pots for lunch. All this is good, and feels like the respectable life of a château, the idle and intelligent existence of a well-born man. I like the owners of Chenonceaux."



Félix and Paul Nadar
Gustave Flaubert
19th century. Coll. & © BnF, Paris.

George Sand,
Histoire de ma vie, vol. 1, 1855

The Dupin, a family affair

"Beautiful and charming, simple, strong and calm, Madame Dupin ended her days at Chenonceaux* at a very advanced age. The style of her writing is as limpid as her soul, as delicate, as fresh as the features of her face. This style is her own, and the elegant correction in no way diminishes from its originality. She writes in the language of her time, but she has the style of Montaigne, the line of Bayle, and it is clear that this lovely woman is not afraid to shake the dust off the old masters. She does not imitate them, but she has assimilated them, like a strong, well-nourished belly."



George Sand
Photograph, 1864. Coll. & © BnF, Paris.

Marguerite Yourcenar, "*Ah mon beau château,*" in *Sous bénéfice d'inventaire, 1962*

The tale of Chenonceau

"There exist nymph-châteaux, reclining indolently on the banks of running water; there are Narcissus-châteaux, reflected in the calm waters of moats, caught in the play of reflections that creates a fluid, trembling wall at the base of the stone structure. Chenonceaux* belongs to both these categories. Smaller than most of the royal châteaux in the Loire Valley, gently surrounded by the idyllic countryside hidden away in the Touraine area, it does not, like Ambroise or Blois, evoke its more majestic neighbors, the memory of decisive moments in French history. Nor is it like Chambord, an immense hunting lodge created on the extravagant whim of a king. Its discreet charm is almost that of a private residence, and as luck would have it, it was above all, the residence of women."



Marguerite Yourcenar
1981. © Louis Monier / Rue des Archives.

* The village of Chenonceaux used to be written with a final "x"; the château without. In the nineteenth century, and even more recently, authors added an "x."

1559 CATHERINE WANTS TO GET RID OF DIANE AFTER HENRI'S II DEATH

Chenonceau, forever

After the death of her husband, Henri II, Catherine de Médicis finally had power over her rival Diane de Poitiers. She used strategy, negotiations and threats. A battle was underway; Diane was spared, but she had to give up Chenonceau.

CLAUDE POMMEREAU
Editor

Henri had adored Diane de Poitiers from childhood, even though she was twenty years his senior. Age never seemed to have any affect on this exceptional woman. She was a keen hunter and loved to swim. "I saw Madame la Duchesse de Valentinois—a title granted by Henri II—as lovely to look at, as fresh and as attractive as when she was thirty years old," wrote the memoirist Brantôme, when she was well over fifty. It was miraculous for the age. She held total sway over her lover, and was exceptionally greedy. Her motto: More is better. Henri II gave her jewels, châteaux and land. She was equally avaricious in managing her property. In order to become the undisputed owner of Chenonceau, a royal estate the king could not refuse to her, even though she knew it was inalienable, she forced the former owner, Bohier, to put it up for sale once again. In 1555, she acquired the château, which once again became "private property."

Queen Catherine, who was stout and spoke with a strong accent, could barely contain herself in dealing with this star, a situation aggravated by the fact that she was in love with her husband. It was even said that she had to wait for Diane's permission before her husband would share her bed. The king, a great hunter and athlete, loved jousting, an event that was waning in popularity. One evening in 1559, his friend Montgomery pierced the king's eye with his lance, wounding him fatally. It was time for revenge. Diane was grief-stricken. The court watched and waited, convinced that Catherine would punish her rival mercilessly.

Catherine demanded that Diane return her diamonds and jewels, property of the Crown, even before the king died. She gave an arrogant reply to the queen's messenger, saying she did not fear her enemies, and though the king had died, she had no intention of following him.

She therefore opted to stay alive, especially as she could count



on the powerful support of the Catholic House of Guise. Without it, she would have been at great risk from one of the "accidental" deaths that seem to hover around the Médicis court. As for Catherine, she decided to play for time; she did not want to compromise her new authority with a

rash display of hatred, because she needed the Guise family to battle the threat of the Protestant princes. Diane returned the jewelry. Catherine wanted more; for years she had dreamed of the jewel on the banks of the Cher. The duchess had to give up Chenonceau! Diane sent back a dismissive refusal. At the queen mother's instigation, all of the provincial *deputés* then signed a decree forcing all those who had received government gifts during Henri II and François I's reigns to liquidate them and transfer the funds from the sale to the royal coffers, which were dismally empty.

When it came time for a final confrontation, Diane wisely complied and agreed to exchange her property for the Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire, which had belonged to the Florentine since 1550, and had an intrinsic value 30 percent greater than Chenonceau. The exchange agreement was signed at the Château de Blois in late 1559; a member of the Guise family, the Cardinal de Lorraine, represented the queen mother in the transaction.

Diane rarely set foot in Chaumont, moving instead to her property in Limours, where she lived in relative obscurity.

Medallions of Catherine de Médicis and Diane de Poitiers

Coll. château de Chenonceau, print collection.
© Stevens Frémont.

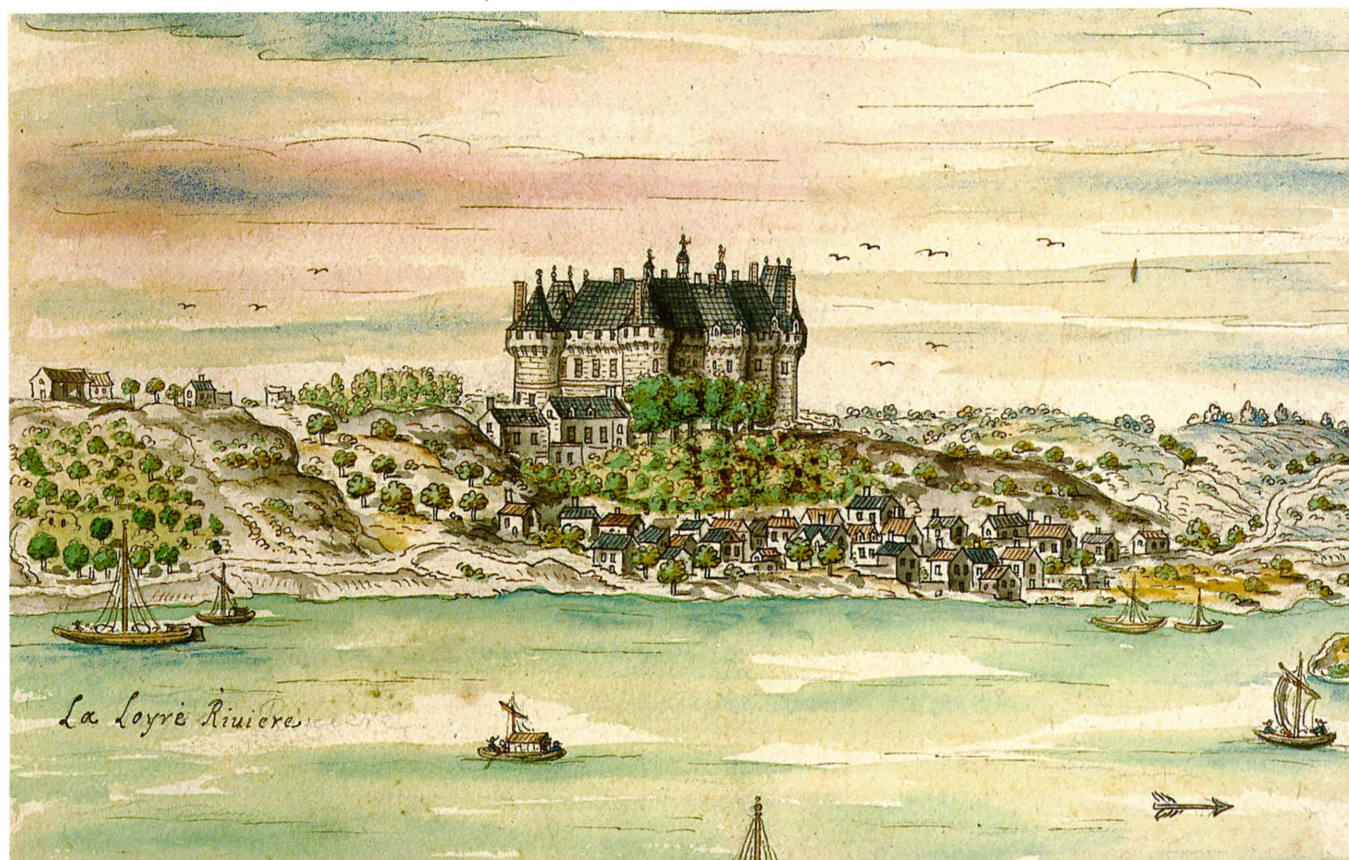
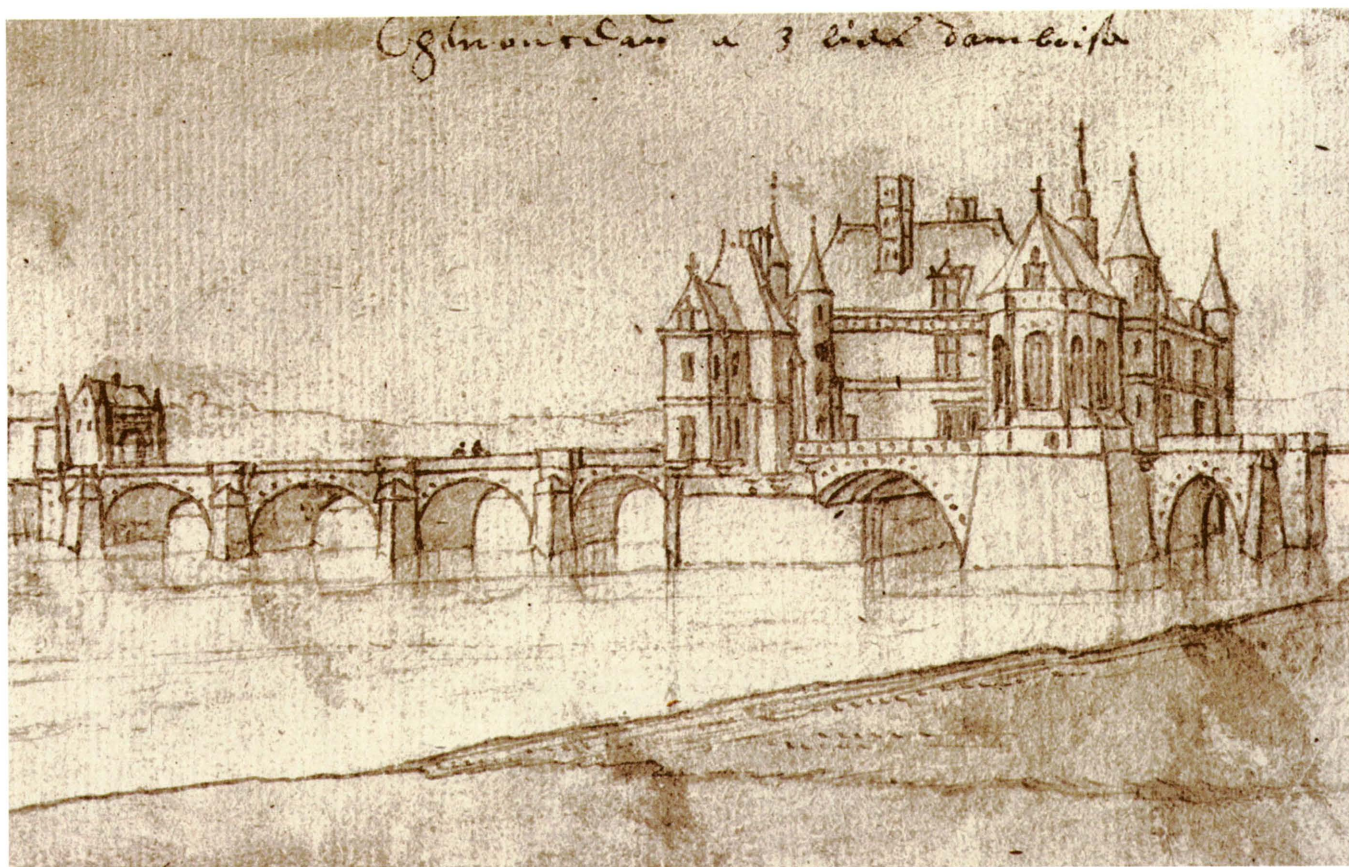
*Anonymous
Chenonceau, 3 lieues from Amboise*

Ca 1560, pen and ink wash, Coll. château de Chenonceau. © Cecil Mathieu.

*Louis Boudan
Château and town of Chaumont*

1699, watercolor. Coll. & © BnF, Paris.

Château de 3 lieues d'Amboise



La Loire Rivière

1560 CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS ORGANIZES FESTIVITIES FOR FRANÇOIS II AND MARIE STUART

Italian splendor at Chenonceau

The queen had just taken possession of the château; born a Médicis, she fully grasped the art of pomp and grandeur. In 1560 she organized a lavish reception for her son, the frail François II, in a tense political climate that foreshadowed the Wars of Religion.

CLAUDE POMMEREAU

Editor

The political situation worried the queen mother. The leading Protestants, Louis de Condé, Antoine de Navarre and Coligny, wanted to take power from the House of Guise. Realizing she was fighting a losing battle, she withdrew to the Château d'Ambroise. Condé then told his friend La Renaudie of his plot to abduct the young king. The conspirators were highly inept, and were quickly discovered in the forest around the château; what followed was a massacre. A pestilential smell hung over the air for kilometers around Ambroise. To flee this hell, the queen mother—urged on by her court of young girls, the famous Flying Squadron she surrounded herself with, and which she used as informants and spies throughout the Wars of Religion—decided to organize an immense reception. Chenonceau, a few kilometers away, would provide the backdrop. It was to honor her son and Marie Stuart, although the latter had nothing but disdain for her mother-in-law, whom she described as a “Florentine shopkeeper.” Along the road, nearly 900 workers had prepared the celebration. They cheered from the hills, waving large white poles tied with green branches; their wives were seated lower down, their heads crowned with hats decorated with a multitude of colors. Along the route were scattered “large bouquets of violets, wallflowers and other decent and suitable flowers,” as described by Le Plessis. On March 31, 1560, François II, flanked by his three brothers, made a triumphant entrance into his mother’s château, greeted by a thirty-canon salute, and closely followed by the humiliated and pathetic Condé and Coligny, who had watched silently as their friends’ throats were cut in the forest. The ball began under the impetus of Primaticcio, 55 years old, who had been appointed Superintendent of Royal Buildings by the young king, and exerted what amounted to total artistic tyranny over the court.



He designed the costumes and the décors, giving to the festivities a rather pedantic and literary slant that the queen mother loved. Primaticcio harked back to the glories of the Pléiade, Ronsard, du Bellay and Jodelle, to cover the three successive triumphal arches placed at the château entrance with poems and maxims borrowed from the Greeks and Romans. Written on the first one, eight meters high and six meters wide, was a Latin phrase, which read: “To the divine François, son of the divine Henry and grandson of the divine François, very good and very happy prince.” The terrace from which rose the medieval Marques fortress was illuminated by a sort of beacon; inside burned four large lamps fitted with

colored glass. Blue taffeta banners floated on the gilded columns of the second arch adorned with naiads with inscriptions in gold announcing the return of peace and celebrating the king’s victory over all the troublemakers and rebels. The naiads were pouring a fine shower of claret wine from Chenonceau over the cortege. The drawbridge was then lowered before the king and he entered the château on foot, framed on one side by Fame and on the other by Victory, both by Primaticcio. On the balcony, a Pallas, dressed in antique robes, carrying a spear and a shield, symbolizing the wisdom of the queen mother, greeted him and tossed bouquets of flowers and leaves—which astonished the king no end. François II would die several months later. Marie Stuart had to return to Scotland.

Primaticcio *Self-Portrait*

16th century, oil on canvas,
Coll. Galerie des Offices,
Florence. © Ministère
des Biens culturels / Scala,
Florence.

French school

*Ball given at the Louvre and attended by
Henri III and Catherine de Médicis for the
marriage of Anne, duc de Joyeuse and Marguerite
de Lorraine-Vaudémont, September 24, 1581 (detail),*

16th century, oil on canvas, 122 x 185 cm., Coll. châteaux de Versailles
et de Trianon., © RMN (château de Versailles) / Franck Raux.



1793 THE REVOLUTIONARIES CLASH WITH A SWORN PRIEST

Louise Dupin saves her château

An intelligent woman lauded by Jean-Jacques Rousseau for her beauty, Louise Dupin cleverly protected Chenonceau. During the French Revolution, she braved the destructive fury that was raging throughout France.

JEAN DES CARS

Historian

Chenonceau was always—and still is—under the sway of women. Among the “Women of Chenonceau” is one who confronted the revolutionary tumult which a remarkable courage, flexibility and resistance, thereby saving the château from a dire fate. She had already awakened the château from its gloomy, interminable lethargy after her husband, tax collector Claude Dupin, purchased the property. Light-hearted, spiritual and cultivated, she held a brilliant literary and philosophical salon at Chenonceau, where she hosted, among others, Montesquieu, Buffon, Fontenelle, Marivaux and Madame du Deffand, and hired Rousseau as her secretary and son’s tutor, who utterly enjoyed his time—and the food—at the château.

Louise Dupin was 83 years old when the Revolution broke out. Her age, which was very advanced for the time, did not protect her from the conflict; even though she was open-minded, she was viewed as a former noble. Fortunately, she had an ally, who became a supporter, in Abbé Lecomte, the priest of Chenonceau.

This intrepid rural priest was a bit rough, but lucid, and quickly understood that the château was threatened with destruction. Although he was president of the revolutionary committee of Ambroise, he followed his first, decisive instinct. He confronted the angry crowd: “What! Citizens! You have only a single bridge between Montrichard and Bléré! And you want to demolish it! You are enemies of the Public Good!” His words had the desired effect: the château-bridge had to be saved. But this raised another peril. As the decree by the Constituante had sequestered Chenonceau, they had to prove that it was not



part of the royal property. Cleverly, the priest and Louise Dupin pulled out all the documents proving that it was indeed private property.

In this struggle, the constitutional Abbé Lecomte achieved some sort of revenge: driven from his presbytery, he became the château’s manager. Yet this was not enough. He had to prove his good faith. In a sort of purifying auto-dafé, the priest and the owner burned seventy-eight portraits of monarchs, including one of the Sun King. Also thrown into the flames were woodwork and paneling decorated with the arms of Henri II and Catherine de Médicis. Everything that carried a mark of royalty was burned to ashes. At the same time, and in the greatest secrecy,

Abbé Lecomte was able to save Mme Dupin’s jewelry and sumptuous wardrobe. But they did even more. Louise and her priest transformed the chapel into a wood storeroom, which saved it from destruction; thanks to their efforts visitors can still read an inscription by Marie Stuart’s Scottish guard. They also organized a banquet for the National Guard, and donated canons. Louise died on November 20, 1799, at the age of 93. According to her wishes, she was laid to rest in a tomb built in the gardens. Her soul is certainly still watching over this unique château, which she saved with the—sometimes convoluted—blessing of Abbé Lecomte.

Jean-Marc Nattier
Madame Dupin

Ca 1745, oil on canvas.
Coll. Château de Chenonceau, Louis XIV’s living room. © Stevens Frémont.

Letter from the Directoire revolutionary administrators from the Loches district, thanking citizen Dupin for the decorations she donated.

1940 CHENONCEAU STANDS ON THE LINE OF DEMARCATION

The bridge to freedom

Northern France was occupied; the Gallery was the only passage over the Cher to the free zone. The Menier family, owners of the château, helped refugees, Jews and resistance fighters flee the Nazi oppressors.

FRÉDÉRIC DELAHAYE

Historian

France had lost the battle. The French took to the roads, fleeing ahead of the German troops. The Direction de l'Infanterie of the Ministry of War, headquartered at the château, also fled, leaving behind its archives. German troops took up position on the banks of the Cher and bombarded the gardens, thinking they could flush out a few French soldiers. A shell flew right through the Gallery, Catherine's garden was gutted. The Germans then crossed the Cher without encountering any resistance. The fate of France for the five years to come unfolded on June 22, 1940, in the clearing of Rethondes, but also in the village of Chenonceau and even more in the château itself. Article 2 of the Armistice Convention imposed by the occupiers defined the demarcation line dividing France into a zone under German control in the north and a zone under the authority of the French government in the south. Thirteen *départements* were targeted by this article. The Cher was on the line, although no one had thought of the situation of the Château de Chenonceau, which straddled the river. Anyone who wanted to cross the line had to have an *ausweis*, issued by the Kommandantur, which were extremely difficult to obtain. Thousands of refugees—people from Alsace, Lorraine, fleeing prisoners of war, private individuals merely trying to return home, and Jews, were trying to cross the line at all costs.

Gaston Menier, the château's owner, handed the property over to his manager, M. Baugé. This is how, under the authority of Simone, widow of Georges Menier (Gaston's son), a decision was made to open the Gallery as a secret passageway. Local residents, like M. Tessier, the son of the village grocer, used it regularly to see their families and to obtain supplies. In December 1940 and January 1941, seven to ten German soldiers moved into the Dômes building. The



Germans then agreed to evacuate the château, recognizing that it was a “historic monument.” Soldiers in the occupied zone patrolled the riverbank according to a regular schedule, which made it extremely risky for the local smugglers. Some mornings, bodies were found on the riverbanks, victims of German grenades tossed randomly during the night.

Aware of the dangers, Mme Georges

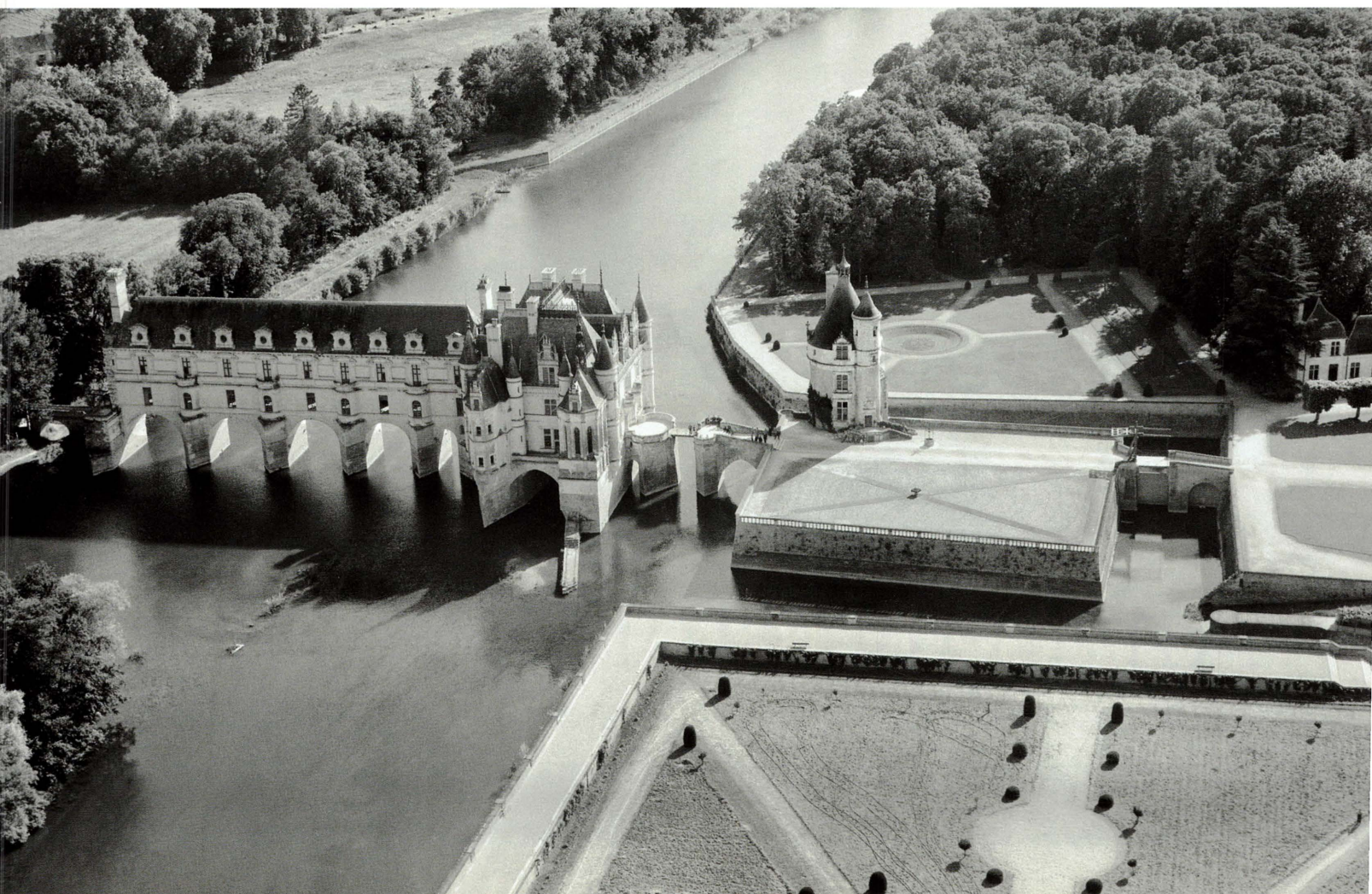
Menier decided to use the château to assist the refugees. A number of Jews, like the Galezowska sisters, escaped to safety in the free zone by crossing the gallery, fleeing *in extremis* the Gestapo who had arrived to arrest them. After the German troops crossed the line in November 1942, the Château de Chenonceau continued to survive, at times becoming the playground for the village children, the in-credulous observers of History. Weeds took over the flowerbeds, while the German soldiers used their machine guns to fish for pike in the moat. The Normandy landings did not end the war for Chenonceau. On July 7, 1944, an American airplane bombing the station also destroyed the chapel's stained-glass windows. Two months later, the Cher was liberated. The Menier family could return to the château, where they embarked on an energetic restoration of the château and Catherine de Médicis' garden.

Bilingual signpost marking the line of demarcation.
© DR.

Entrance to the Château de Chenonceau in 1942. The German sentry box is visible to the left, painted with a herringbone pattern. Private coll. © DR.

Roger Henrard,

Aerial view of the Château de Chenonceau in 1949. Phototype. Coll. Région Centre, Inventaire général, Orléans. © Roger Henrard / Adagp, Paris 2010. © Région Centre, Inventaire général.





An architectural gem from

The construction of Chenonceau spanned the 16th century, developing from the first to the



the French Renaissance

second Renaissance. The decorative lines were simplified under the classical influence.

THE CHÂTEAU'S UNIQUE DIFFERENCE: THE GALLERY SPANNING THE CHER

The three-part construction

JULIEN NOBLET

Art historian

**Philibert
Delorme**
From
*Premier Tome
de l'Architec-
ture*

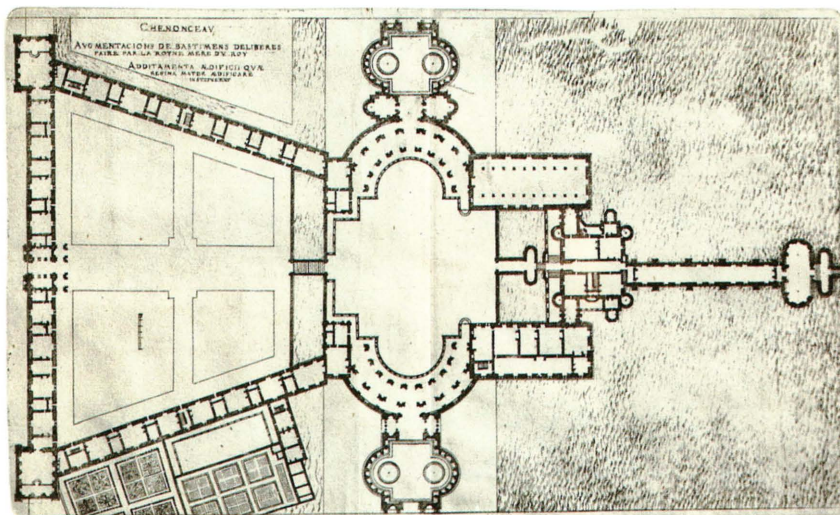
1545, printed book.
Coll. Musée National
de la Renaissance,
Écouen. © RMN /
René-Gabriel Ojéda.
Architect who
designed Diane's
gallery, completed
by Catherine.



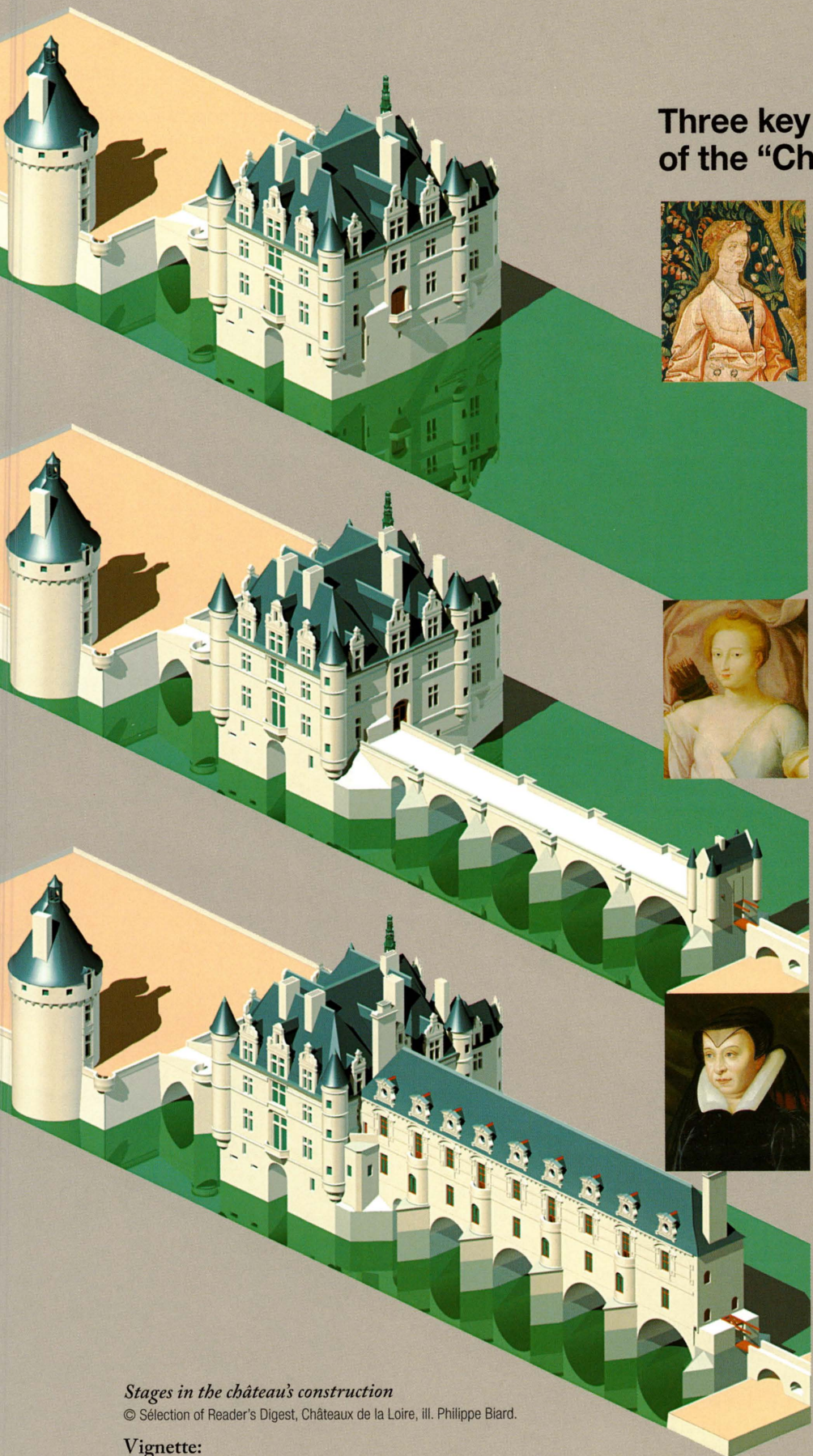
Located in the middle of the Cher River, Chenonceau is one of the architectural treasures of the Loire Valley. It illustrates the ambition of Thomas Bohier and his wife to showcase their new social standing, with an innovative construction plan and décor largely inspired by the new repertory of the Italian Renaissance. Built with a nearly square layout and modular system, a design also found at Chambord, Chenonceau diverges from the courtyard-style châteaux, like Le Verger, Bury and Azay-le-Rideau. The regular layout of the facades, on the other hand, like the appearance of a banister on banister staircase, was inspired directly from Bury, constructed several years earlier. As for the goal of integrating the château with its environment and opening it up to the surrounding countryside—illustrated by the many windows offering views of the river—it is reminiscent of the Venetian palaces that Bohier visited during his frequent trips to Italy.

Catherine's ideal project

The queen mother's overall plan, known through engravings by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, reflected her desire to make Chenonceau a royal residence. The initial château would have extended to the south with the addition of a double gallery, flanked by two rectangular buildings above the Cher. A large, trapezoidal forecourt preceded the former platform of the Château des Marques, framed by two colonnaded exedrae, new structures that would have created reception and entertainment areas for the sovereign and her court followers. Catherine's death put an end to the project, which had only just begun with the construction of the Dômes wing.



Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, *Sketch for the grand Chenonceau project, with "the additions of buildings made by the king's queen mother."* 1579, engraving from the *Second volume des plus excellents Bastiments de France*. Coll. château de Chenonceau, print collection. © Cecil Mathieu.



Three key dates in the construction of the “Château des Dames”



1517

Katherine Briçonnet's manor

Bohier razed the former Château des Marques, retaining only the main tower; the forecourt was created from the foundations of this château, while the new château was built on the pillars of the former mill. In addition to its position over the river, this manor had a number of remarkable features: a nearly square floor plan, altered only to the east by the projections of the chapel and the study, which were essential elements in every château.



1547

Diane de Poitiers's Gallery

With the aim of creating new gardens on the opposite bank of the Cher, Diane de Poitiers commissioned the king's architect Philibert Delorme to construct a 60-meter-long arched bridge and gallery over the river. Only the bridge was built; connected to the rear façade of the château, it was not aligned directly with the entrance corridor, but rather slightly offset so that it did not block the central window. A gatehouse on the far south side controlled the passageway between the bridge and the new gardens.



1559

Catherine de Médicis' additions

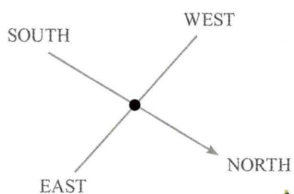
In late 1559, Catherine forced Diane to exchange Chenonceau for the Château de Chaumont. Once she finally had possession of the château, the queen mother decided to proceed with the bridge project, and expanded it by adding two galleries. This work was meant to increase the capacity of a château that was by then destined to receive the court. The mannerist design of the façades, completed in 1581, is sometimes attributed to Jean Bullant.

Stages in the château's construction

© Sélection of Reader's Digest, Châteaux de la Loire, ill. Philippe Biard.

Vignette:

1. Portrait believed to be Katherine Briçonnet, *La Danse* (detail), ca 1500, wool and silk tapestry, 220 x 139 cm. Coll. Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN / Jean Schormans;
2. Primaticcio, *Portrait of Diane de Poitiers as Diane the Huntress* (detail), see p. 31. Coll. château de Chenonceau. © Stevens Frémont;
3. Henri Sauvage, *Portrait of Catherine de Médicis* (detail), see p. 7. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Diane de Poitiers's room. © Stevens Frémont.



The attic first housed pages and ladies in waiting, then a community of twelve Capuchin nuns, brought there by the Duchesse de Mercœur. It had a commons room, cells and an oratory where the nuns officiated until 1634. They were kept isolated by a wooden drawbridge.

One of the five stone pillars from Chisseaux and Houdes, supporting the arches of the bridge.

The high, steeply pitched roofs give the château a more delicate shape: the attics on the east and west, connected by a transverse roof, underscore the square design of the château, divided into two equal sections via a corridor down the middle.

The pillar of the former mill supports the corbelled study.

Life on the Cher

Positioned on the Cher, the Château de Chenonceau controlled the busy river traffic of goods—wood, stone, salt, wine—transiting to the Loire via scows.

These were small, lightweight boats designed to carry goods on rivers that were inaccessible to the larger ships that anchored at the estuaries. Once they reached their destination, they could be dismantled and the wooden planks reused. The Cher, which had abundant fish, provided large quantities of salmon and shad. Chef François Pierre de La Varenne published delicious recipes in *Le Vrai Cuisinier français* in 1651.




The chapel's central window differs from the château's other windows; it features a pointed arch and tracery.

Cutaway diagram of the château

© Sélection du Reader's Digest, Châteaux de la Loire, illustration Philippe Biard.

Inside the château

Chenonceau, built from handsome freestone from the nearby quarries of Bourré, reflects brilliantly white on the river's surface.



Corbelled turrets, echoing the traditional corner towers and symbolizing seigniorial power, grace the building's corners.

Lit by a double mullion window, the "Guard room" controlled access to the seigniorial, then the royal, bedroom.

The Marques Tower, a vestige of the earlier château, was used as living quarters by the Bohier as work proceeded; they modified the structure, inspired by the reigning fashion for "antique-style" architecture.

The platform, set off by the moat, once supported the medieval Château des Marques; it then became the forecourt for the Renaissance château.

The architectural lessons of Chenonceau

JULIEN NOBLET

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEAN-BENOÎT HÉRON

Chimneystacks

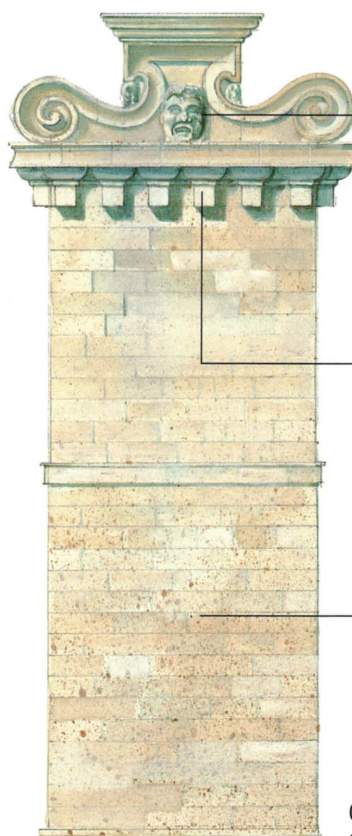
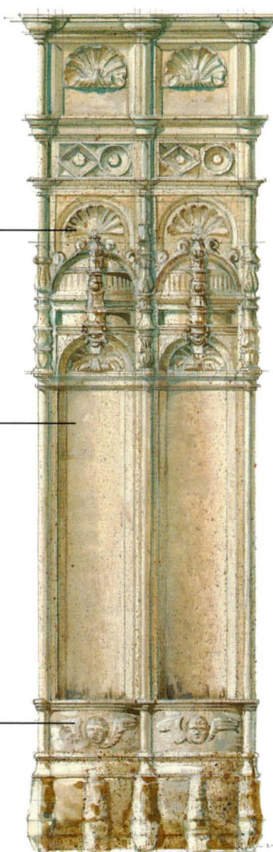
The conduits for venting smoke were restored in the second half of the nineteenth century, under the impetus of Marguerite Pelouze and her brother, Daniel Wilson. The goal of the renovation, supervised by architect Félix Roguet, was to restore the château to its original appearance.

The chimneystacks reflect the neo-Renaissance fashion of the era: niches with candelabra and shells decorate the chimneystacks of Thomas Bohier's château.

This double-niche design repeats the motifs used in churches and chapels, in which sculptures were placed.

The carved décor on the lower section of the chimneystack is less elaborate.

Chimneystack from the Bohier-Briçonnet château.



Scrolls frame a mascarón atop the chimneystacks of the double gallery.

A frieze of guttae on the chimneystack entablature, inspired directly from the Doric order of Greek temples. This ornamental motif was often placed at the base of triglyphs.

The decoration on the chimneystacks of the Bohier manor were replaced with a simpler design.

Chimneystack atop one end of the gallery.

Two decorative fireplaces

The fireplaces, like the other interior decorative elements such as the paneling and tiles, were restored to an early Renaissance (left) or later Renaissance (right) style, depending on their location. The latter fireplace, decorated with chained captives evoking the victories of Henri II, as well as the interlaced C and H for Catherine de Médicis and her spouse, are in the upper gallery; they were carved by Michel-Léon Breuil, a famous sculptor who studied with Claude Ramey.

Fireplace in François I's bedroom



Fireplace in the upper gallery



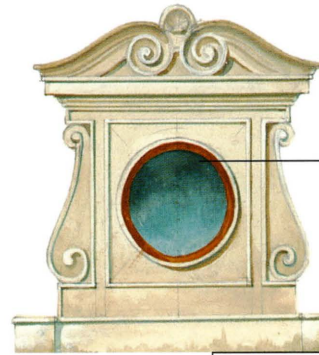
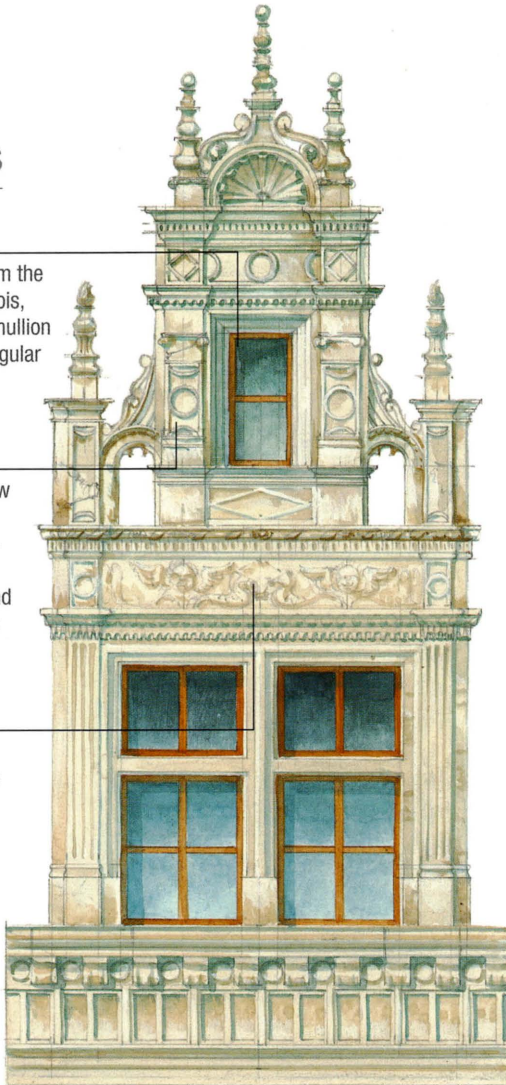
Windows

The central dormer window, inspired from the François I wing at Blois, combines a double mullion topped with a rectangular opening.

The decoration, inspired from the new repertory of transalpine motifs—pilasters with fluted shafts, flowerpots and finials—emphasizes the vertical lines.

The only horizontal line comes from the friezes carved above the two windows, opposed by the lateral projections placed in the extension of the pilasters.

Central window on the château's façade.

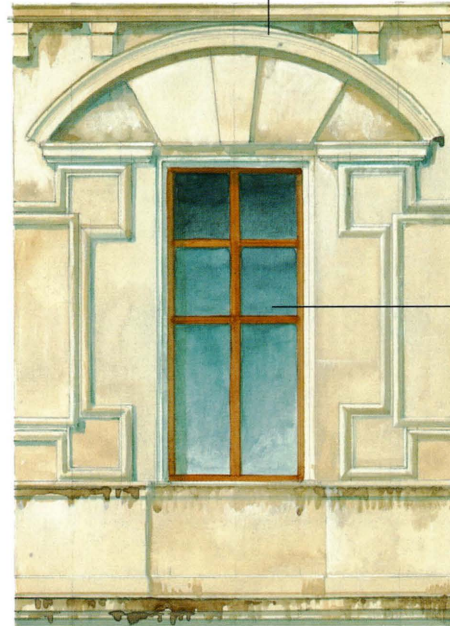


The attic of the double gallery is illuminated by sober oeil-de-bœuf windows.

The window illuminating the upper gallery features a curved pediment, which is repeated in the Henri II fireplace in the gallery.

The central mullion forming a cross was replaced by rectangular windows.

Identical window reproduced on the upper section of the gallery.



Two Renaissance vaulted ceilings

The keystone is placed at the intersection of the vaults.

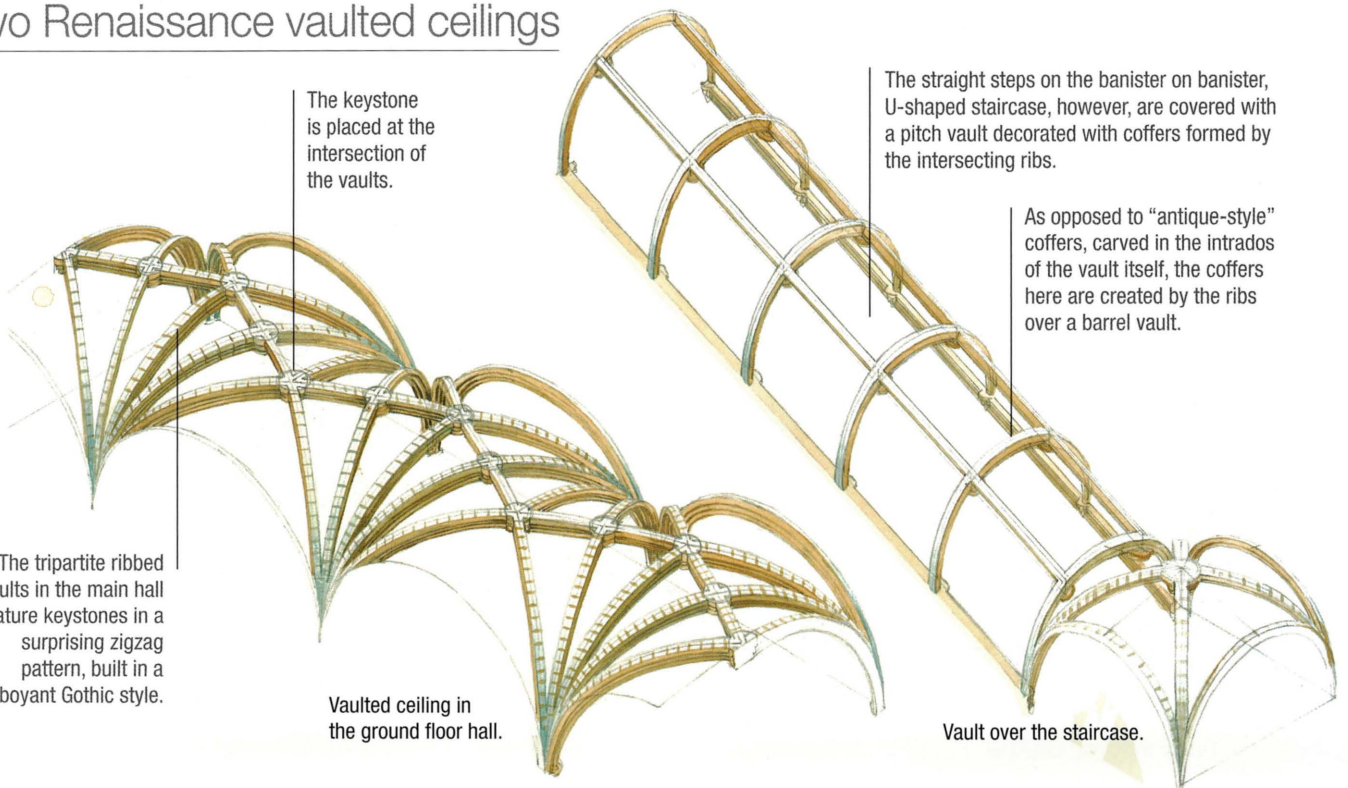
The straight steps on the banister on banister, U-shaped staircase, however, are covered with a pitch vault decorated with coffers formed by the intersecting ribs.

As opposed to "antique-style" coffers, carved in the intrados of the vault itself, the coffers here are created by the ribs over a barrel vault.

The tripartite ribbed vaults in the main hall feature keystones in a surprising zigzag pattern, built in a flamboyant Gothic style.

Vaulted ceiling in the ground floor hall.

Vault over the staircase.



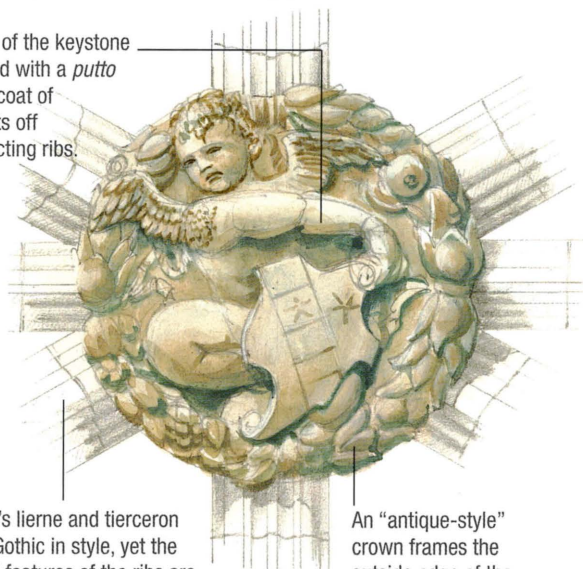
Renaissance decorative elements

JULIEN NOBLET

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JEAN-BENOÎT HÉRON

The chapel's keystone

The center of the keystone is decorated with a *putto* carrying a coat of arms; it sets off the intersecting ribs.



The chapel's lierne and tierceron vaults are Gothic in style, yet the ornamental features of the ribs are simplified, with a combination of round and flat molding inspired by the new repertory of transalpine motifs.

An "antique-style" crown frames the outside edge of the keystone, echoing the enameled terracotta floral wreathes of Girolamo della Robbia.

Entrance pilaster

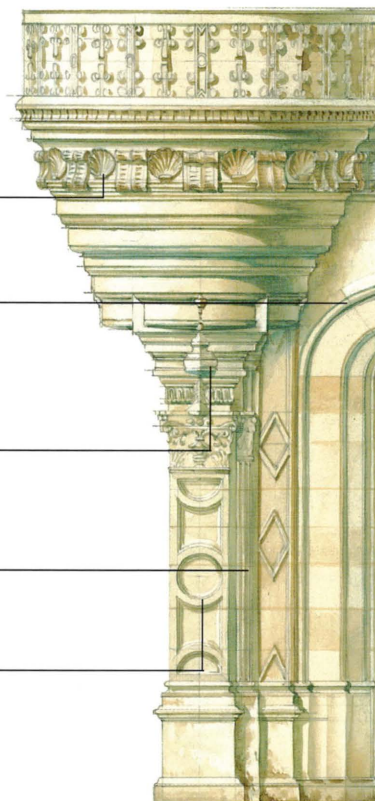
Alternating shells and scrolls decorate the corbel supporting the balcony.

A basket arch, designed to replicate the "antique-style" curve of a round arch, covers the door.

A double pilaster supports the underside of the corbel.

A fluted motif accentuates the vertical line.

The shaft, decorated with geometric designs (here, a disk and two half-disks), stands on a pedestal.



The ceilings of Chenonceau



The initials of Thomas Bohier (TB) and of his wife, (TK, K for Katherine) decorate the ribs defining the coffers.

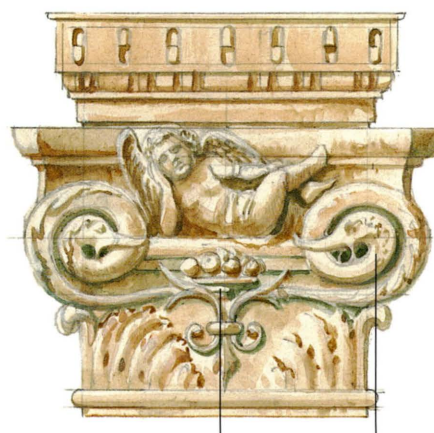
The Italian-style coffered ceiling in the library is the oldest of its kind in France.



The Five Queens' bedroom is dominated by a triangular coffered ceiling. The other rooms have exposed beam ceilings, in the French tradition.

Each coffer is decorated with cornucopia and teardrop motifs.

Capital of the chapel door

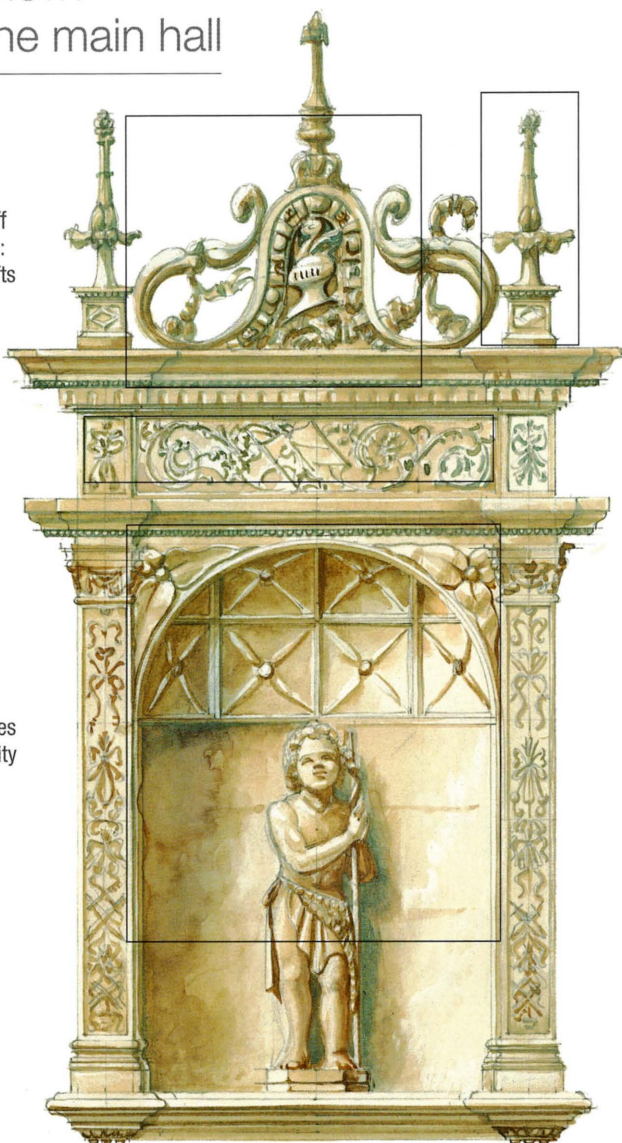


The scrolls supporting the projection decorated with a winged *putto* motif rise from a basket adorned with acanthus leaves.

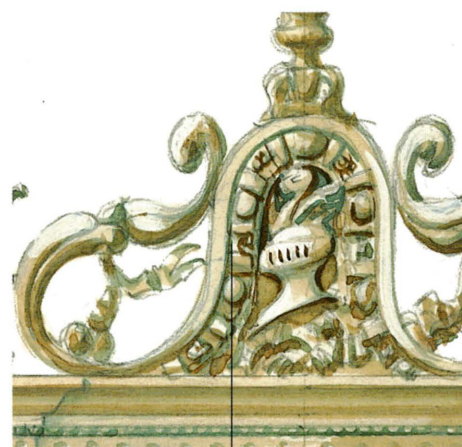
The Corinthian-style capital evokes the uppermost part of antic orders, without replicating them precisely.

Detailed view: niche in the main hall

This niche, located in the ground floor entrance hall, is set off by an elaborate frame: two pilasters, the shafts decorated with ornamental elements and topped with Italian-style capitals; they support a frieze carved with delicate foliate scrolls. Curved molding, flanked by two finials, evoke a pediment; in the center is a helmet topped with a crest. Two "S" shapes connect the motifs on the uppermost section, recalling the characteristic principles of fluidity and continuity of the flamboyant Gothic style.



Placed on a die-shaped base, this slender floral motif, reminiscent of a Gothic pinnacle, extends the vertical lines of the composition, formed by the pilasters and lateral projections of the frieze.



A line of ovum, a motif used frequently by sculptors in the early French Renaissance, underscores the curve of the molding.



The delicately carved foliate scrolls are more slender, with much denser foliage than the Italian versions.

The niche is not topped with a shell: it is covered with an "antique-style" coffer, but the surface is decorated with double ribs that intersect like a vault.



PORTFOLIO

The masterpieces

Chenonceau has an admirable collection of tapestries and paintings. These many works, painted by the greatest European artists of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, echo the turbulent history of the château and the leading role played by the women who lived here.

ARMELLE FÉMELAT Art historian



Pierre Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist

1615, oil on canvas, 120 x 160 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Louis XIV's living room. © Stevens Frémont.

Saint John the Baptist (wearing a camel skin) and Jesus are petting a lamb, an attribute of Christ and his precursor. It symbolizes the future sacrifice of the Savior, as suggested by the blood-colored vermillion shade of the fabric, which energizes and warms the composition. The tender, bucolic image of Jesus and John the Baptist as children, a frequent theme since the Renaissance, illustrates the sensitive and intimate tone of seventeenth-century devotional paintings.



Francesco Primaticcio (1504-1570)

Portrait of Diane de Poitiers as Diana the Huntress

1550, oil on canvas, 158 x 180. Coll. château de Chenonceau, François I's bedroom. © Stevens Frémont.

When Primaticcio painted this mythological portrait of Diane de Poitiers as Diana the Huntress, he attributed to Henri II's favorite the virtues of the goddess: chastity and beauty. In addition, the presence of winged cupids and arrows are veiled references to the king's feelings for the lady. This dense composition and elaborate iconography, along with the serpentine line linking the figures, are characteristic of the mannerist style.



Jacopo Robusti, known as Tintoretto (1518-1594)

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba

16th century, oil on canvas, 262 x 152.6 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Green study. © Cecil Mathieu.



King Solomon of Israel greets the Queen of Sheba in the Temple of Jerusalem, recently constructed to house the Ark of the Covenant. The queen pays him homage with sumptuous gifts—gold vases, elephant tusks and other presents—from the ancient kingdom of Sheba, located in present-day Yemen and Ethiopia. Depicted in perspective, the rows of columns in the background frame a seascape that looks like Venice, where the painter was born.



**Antonio Allegri da Correggio,
known as Correggio (1489-1534)**

The Education of Cupid

oil on wood, 153 x 103 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Catherine de Médicis' bedroom. © Cecil Mathieu. The young Cupid stands reading between Venus and Mercury, who holds his winged headgear, called a petasus, and winged sandals. This mythological story, widely depicted during the Renaissance, evokes the spiritual and celestial dimension of love. The National Gallery in London has another version of this scene, an oil on canvas painted around 1525, a counterpart of *Venus and Cupid Discovered by a Satyr* in the Louvre, which alludes to earthly love. The painter's smooth touch suits the sensuality of the scene. The sinuous lines, delicate colors and voluptuous rendering prefigure the baroque style.

Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659-1743)

Portrait of Louis XIV

1700, oil on canvas, 170 x 140 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Louis XIV's living room. © Stevens Frémont.

Hyacinthe Rigaud, official painter to the Sun King during the end of his reign, specialized in official portraits. Inspired from the famous 1701 portrait of the monarch wearing coronation robes (in the Louvre), this one glorifies the warrior king. It reproduces the lines on the aging king's face precisely, along with his wig. The imposing frame consists of four pieces of giltwood carved by Lepautre, a famous decorator who prefigured the rococo style.





Charles André, known as Carle van Loo (1705-1765)

The Three Graces

Salon de 1765, oil on canvas, 250 x 204 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, François I's bedroom. © Cecil Mathieu.

The three Graces depict the Nesle sisters, who were successive favorites of King Louis XV. In this mythological portrait, Mme de Châteauroux, Mme de Vintimille and Mme de Mailly represent Euphrosyne, Thalia and Aglaé, allegories of Beauty, Voluptuousness and Chastity—the latter adding a touch of humor to the work! The artist's skill creates a sensuality and smoothness, which Mme de Pompadour appreciated; she protected this artist, as well as Boucher, a brilliant master.



Pierre Paul Rubens (1577-1640)

Adoration of the Magi

17th century, oil on canvas, 102.5 x 83 cm. Coll. château de Chenonceau, Five Queens' bedroom. © Cecil Mathieu.

The lavishly dressed magi and their entourage pay homage to Jesus, presented by His mother on a stone monument; they are placing their offerings at its base. The radiant Child illuminates this nocturnal scene, highlighted in places by the light of torches. This painting by Rubens is a preparatory study for the large painting in the Prado, commissioned around 1609 by the city of Antwerp to decorate the recently renovated states chamber in the town hall. Beyond the religious theme is a political message indicating that it was selected to decorate a secular area: the wise men presenting their gifts, as symbols of peace, allude to the commissions and negotiators of the twelve-year Truce that had just been signed in Antwerp.

DETAILED COMMENTARY

The triumph of charity

ARMELLE FÉMELAT

Art historian



Charity is triumphant atop her chariot, surrounded by elegant women and famous warriors, including Judas Maccabeus, David and Brutus. Beyond the cortege are depicted a few allegories and biblical episodes. With its counterpart, *The Triumph of Strength*, this was part of a larger tapestry, in all likelihood on the theme of the triumph of the Virtues, a theme freely inspired from Petrarch's poem, *Trionfi*. Woven in Flanders in the sixteenth century, this characteristic work is a good example of the tapestries that were fashionable in Europe at the time. A great many of them were produced, despite the exorbitant cost; they were highly prized by powerful leaders of the era, as both practical objects and ostentatious symbols of their wealth.

The Triumph of Charity

Flanders, 1550

Tapestry, 451 x 555 cm.

Coll. château de Chenonceau,

Diane de Poitiers's bedroom.

© Akg-images / Archives CDA /

Guillot.



Charity on her chariot

The feminine allegory of Charity is not represented according to the traditional codes of Western iconography, by which she would be dressed in red, feeding children as a symbol of generosity to those in need. Wearing a crown and a blue silk and white damask dress, she is portrayed more like a Virgin. She stands triumphant in her chariot, her right hand pointing to the sun, while holding a heart against her chest. All these objects symbolize her faith and trust in God, as Charity is one of the three theological virtues, alongside Hope and Faith.



The sacrifice of Isaac

The scene of Isaac's sacrifice depicts an angel staying the arm of Abraham, as he is about to sacrifice his son. Taken from the Book of Genesis, this episode from Abraham's life tells how God tested him, urging him to offer up his son as a burned sacrifice, which explains the bundle of wood behind the kneeling young man. Like the story it illustrates, this image symbolizes the idea of faith.



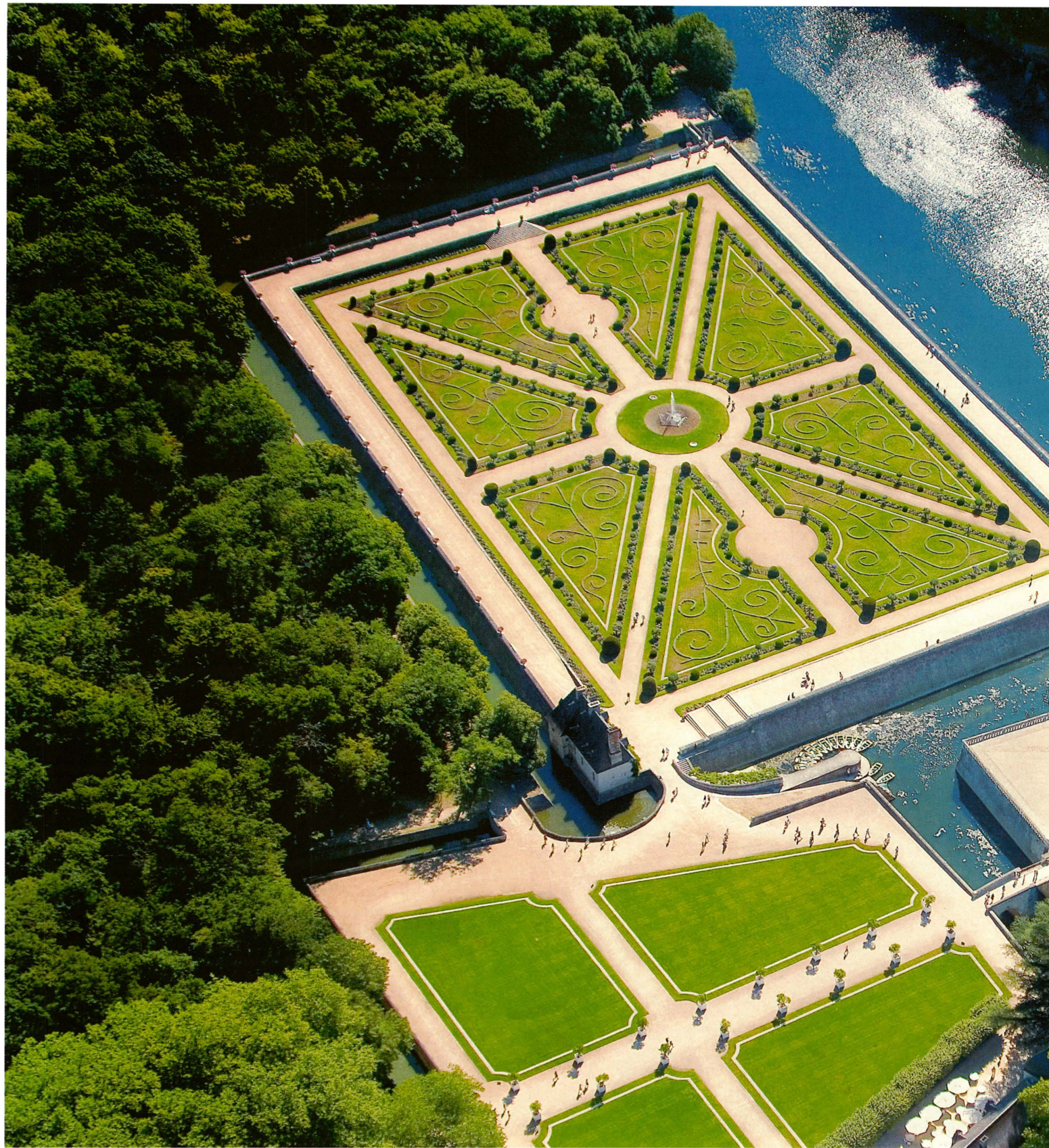
King David

Brandishing an ornate sword in his right hand, King David is walking alongside Brutus, on horseback. Wearing ceremonial armor, a lavish cloak and an honorific collar, he is depicted in the manner of great knights and sovereigns of the period. He brings up the rear of the cortege of famous warriors in Western history who symbolically frame Charity. This Christian interpretation of history illustrates great men accompanying the triumph of this theological virtue.



The allegory of Piety

The elegant young woman walking to the left of Charity is carrying a chalice, a liturgical object used for the consecration of the wine and the Eucharist. The word "PIETAS," embroidered in gold letters on her bust, indicates that she is an allegory for Christian piety. Dionysius is depicted at her feet, trampled by the horse of Judas Maccabeus. This image projects the triumph of Christian faith over paganism, in a reference to the transcendence of the Sacramental wine.



Introduction and tour of

From Thomas Bohier and Katherine Briçonnet to the Menier family, the history

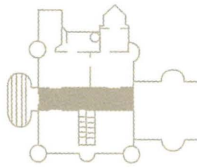


the château

of Chenonceau and the people who created it is written in each of the rooms.

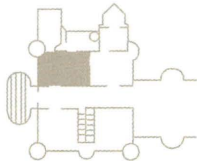
AMÉLIE AMIEL

HALL



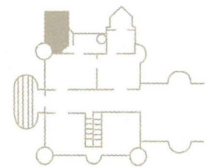
The hall, an architectural element that became fashionable during the Renaissance, led to the other rooms in the residence. The ceiling consists of ribbed vaults, and the offset keystones form a broken line. The capitals feature intertwined plant motifs and mythological figures.

GUARD ROOM



The Guard room was used by the armed men responsible for protecting the king and queen. Thomas Bohier's emblem decorates the chimney, decorated with a rampant lion, while these words are written on the mantelpiece: "If I manage to build Chenonceau, I will be remembered." On the floor are vestiges of decorative majolica.

CHAPEL



**Mino da Fiesole
(1429-1484)**

Virgin and Child

16th century, marble,
48 x 77 cm.

The depth of the scene is created by several layers. The faces and fabric stand out for their delicacy and soft rendering.

The ribbed vault is from the Gothic period, and it underscores the ascending movement of the room. It freed up the walls to make room for large windows.

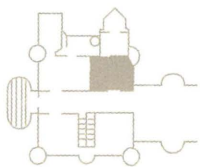
Visitors enter the chapel through an oak door; the panels represent Christ's appearance to Saint Thomas after His resurrection. It carries the words of the Gospel according to Saint John: "Lay your finger here" and "You are my Lord and my God." Saint Thomas doubted the resurrection of Christ, who asked him to touch His stigmata. This saint is the patron saint of Thomas Bohier.

Opposite him is Saint Catherine. The vault is built with ribbed arches. Originally, dais crowned the eight empty niches, in which sculptures were originally placed. The painted Renaissance stained-glass windows, destroyed during bombing in 1944, were replaced ten years later with glass designed by Max Ingrand.

The queens attended mass in the royal gallery dominating the nave, built in 1521. Mme Dupin enlarged it in the eighteenth century to add an organ, but it was later restored to its original dimensions. The loggia to the right of the altar houses a delicate *Virgin and Child* carved from Carrara marble by Mino da Fiesole, a fifteenth-century Florentine sculptor. The walls are decorated with paintings by great masters, including *Saint Anthony of Padua With Child* by Jésus de Murillo and *The Virgin in a Blue Veil* by Il Sassoferrato, with marble-smooth, white skin.

Behind the altar is the crypt constructed by Mme Pelouze, who wanted to be buried here. Yet it remained empty; Mme Pelouze, bankrupt, had to sell the château.



DIANE DE POITIERS'S
BEDROOMThe shadow cast
by King Henri II's favorite

The two caryatids on the corners of the fireplace depict winged women standing on two lions, symbolizing strength.

Flaubert took his time in Diane's bedroom, when he visited in 1847. "Sleeping in Diane de Poitiers' bed ... is worth more than sleeping with a number of other palpable realities," he wrote.



The small bronze of Diane d'Anet next to the bed is the only reminder of the place the Duchesse de Valentinois held in the heart of King Henri II. A large portrait of Catherine de Médicis above the fireplace dominates the room! As if Catherine pursued a *damnatio memoriae* against her rival. The intertwined initials of H and C on the remaining cornice, representing Henri II and Catherine de Médicis, testifies to a love that began before 1533: Even before she arrived in France, Catherine was already in love with Henri, then the Duc d'Orléans, who was not sup-

posed to reign as king. Catherine was tormented her entire life by the cruel irony that their intertwined initials formed the D of Diane de Poitiers. The mantelpiece does not repeat the affront; it is decorated only with separate, not intertwined, initials: H and two Cs. The sculptures were created in the style of Jean Goujon, nicknamed the "Phidias" of the French Renaissance for his extensive knowledge of antique art. The female figures illustrate the sculptor's mannerist style, with their sensuality and lightness, and elongated proportions. The two caryatids on the corners of the fireplace—barely veiled,

winged women—are placed atop lions, symbols of strength. This symbolism is repeated in one of the two Flemish tapestries woven in the sixteenth century, *The Triumph of Strength*, illustrated by a chariot drawn by two lions. A few words in Latin, on the upper part of the tapestry, can be translated as: "He who loves the gifts of heaven with all his heart does not shrink from the deeds dictated by Piety."

A second tapestry represents *The Triumph of Charity* (see the commentary on page 38), depicted in a chariot, holding a heart in her hands and pointing to the sun. The Latin phrase



embroidered in gold Gothic letters on a red background reads: "He who shows strength of heart in the face of danger receives Salvation as a reward at his time of death."

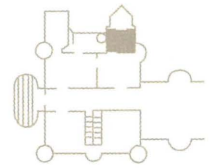
The display case to the left of the canopy bed contains several volumes of the château's archives, while the Henri II armchairs in front of the fireplace are upholstered in Cordovan leather. A *Virgin and Child* by Murillo, a leading figure in the school of Seville, hangs just above the case. The Virgin, with a melancholy look arising from a premonition of her son's fate, is represented in a chiaroscuro

style inspired by Caravaggio, the Italian artist who could paint with light. The angels underscore the celestial nature of the painting.

On the other side of the room, next to the window, is a *Christ Stripped of His Clothes*, by Francisco Ribalta, from the seventeenth-century Italian school. It illustrates the mannerist style with the bright colors on the soldier's armor, the elongated canons and the somewhat theatrical poses.

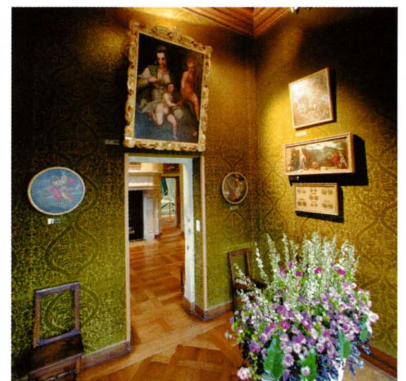
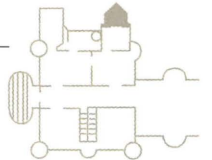
The room has a sober, Italian-style coffered ceiling, decorated with the ornamented initials of Catherine and Henri in the center.

GREEN STUDY



The Green study used to be Catherine de Médicis office, the heart of the monarchy when she became regent of France on Henri II's death. The Gothic and Renaissance *Birthwort Tapestry* is an ode to the recent discovery of the Americas.

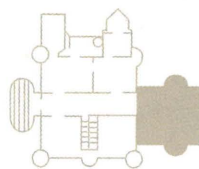
LIBRARY



This room is the former library of Catherine de Médicis, a great bibliophile. Inventories drawn up after her death recorded more than 4,500 works, including 800 ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts, housed in the various royal residences. Above the door, the *Holy Family* by Andrea del Sarto.

GALLERY

The banquet and ceremonial hall



The fireplace at the southern end of the gallery is just for show. The architected construction sets off the simple, geometric lines, which were typical of the later Renaissance.

Was it nostalgia for the Florentine Ponte Vecchio? It's hard to say, but Catherine de Médicis was determined to make her gallery a prestigious showcase decorated with Italian works of art: busts, medallions, statues, and marble and porphyry vases were brought to Chenonceau at great expense.

The gallery, 60 meters long by 6 meters wide, has 18 windows. The original ballroom was inaugurated in 1577 during the lavish festivities held in honor of Henri III. The room had an exposed joist ceiling with a slate and freestone checkerboard-patterned floor. Catherine de Médicis planned to build an oval

room at the southern end of the gallery, but this project was never completed. The series of medallions of famous figures arranged along the length of the gallery was added in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Catherine's collection of antiques, although saved by Marie de Luxembourg during the stormy succession of her sister-in-law Louise de Lorraine, was literally looted by the two grandsons of Françoise de Lorraine and César de Vendôme. Princes Louis-Joseph and Philippe spent far too much money and ended up in court. They removed all of Catherine's sculptures

(except for two busts and five or six medallions), transferring some to their château d'Anet, the rest to Louis XIV's Versailles.

The gallery was not only reserved for pleasure. During the First World War, Gaston Menier, son of the founder of the first chocolate factory in France and owner of Chenonceau, decided to set up a military hospital in the gallery at his own expense. Wounded soldiers could fish in the Cher from their beds! During the Second World War, the gallery spanned the line of demarcation: one side was in the free zone, while the other was in occupied France.






 ICI FURENT SOIGNES
 2254 BLESSES
 PENDANT LA GUERRE
 1914 - 1918

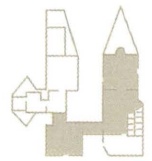
The black and white checkerboard floor accentuates the perspective in the prestigious, 60-meter-long gallery. In the eighteenth century, the memory of Catherine's lost antiques inspired René Vallet de Villeneuve to place 36 medallions of historical figures between the windows.

Among the celebrities in this gallery: the Cardinal de Richelieu to the left, and Louis XIV to the right, depicted in profile in the fashion of antique medallions.



KITCHENS

The most beautiful Renaissance kitchens



One of the specialties prepared in the kitchens: salmon from the Cher. François Pierre de La Varenne offers his recipe for this dish in *Le Vrai Cuisinier François*, which calls for cloves, wine, capers and lard.

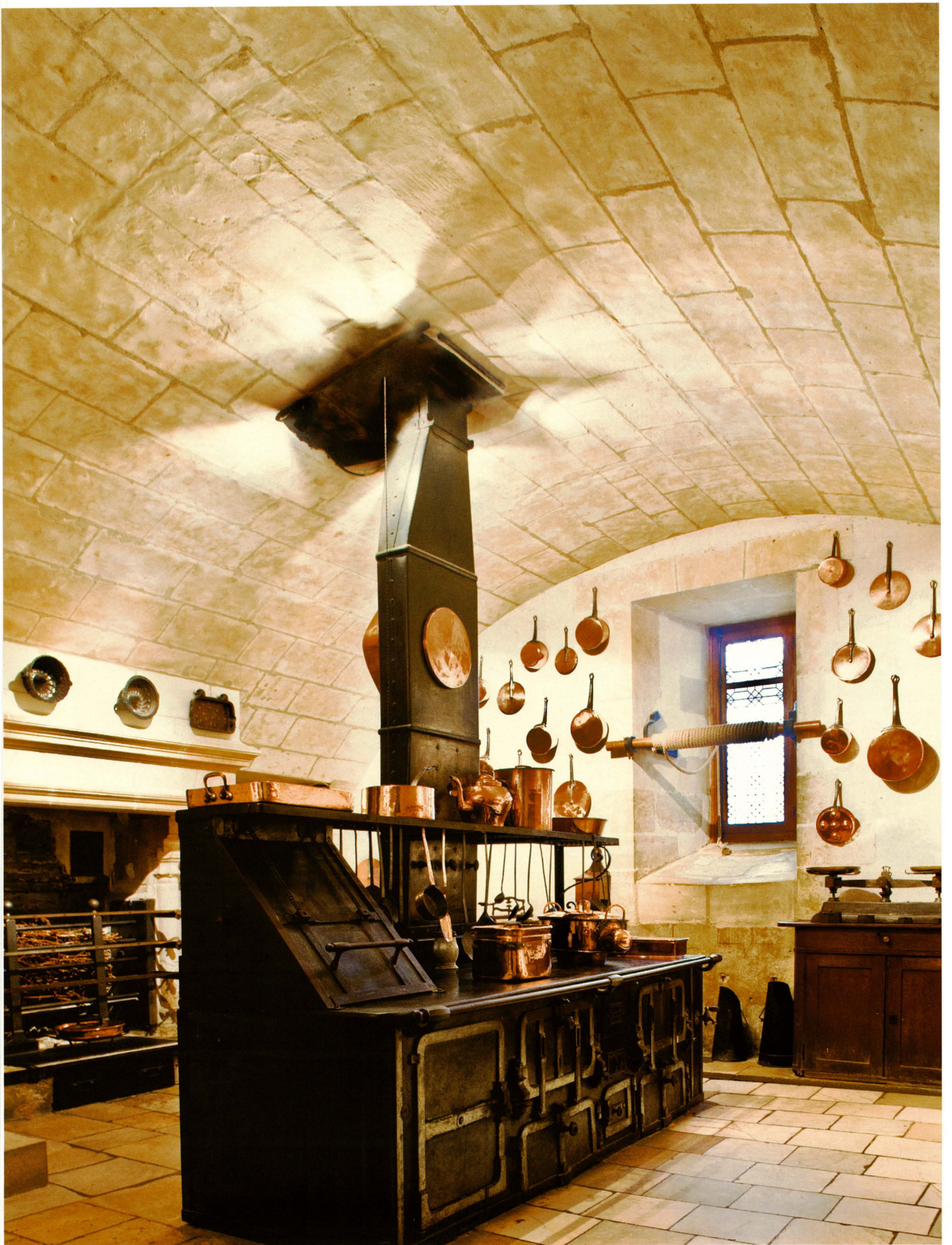
The kitchens are decorated with a collection of more than 150 copper utensils, including pots, cake pans and turbot pans. Some of them carry the name "Menier" or "Parc Monceau."

Famed for her love of festivities, food and celebration, Queen Catherine de Médicis transformed Chenonceau into a pleasure palace. She spent lavishly to distract her sons from the vicissitudes of power. One banquet in 1577 went down in history. It apparently cost the queen 100,000 *livres*, forcing her to take out a loan. It's easy to imagine the kitchen boys, chefs and valets rushing around serving dishes to a multitude of feasting guests during these massive parties, especially as Catherine loved the pleasures of the table. She brought many Italian chefs to the château, and introduced pasta to France. The Chenonceau kitchens are among the most beautiful from the French Renaissance. Installed in the first two piers of the former Marques



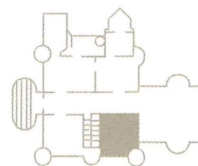
This fireplace with simple lines was fitted with an ingenious spit system, operated via a pulley visible through the window.

mill, they consist of four vaulted rooms: the kitchens, dining room for the staff, pantry and butchery. The sixteenth-century fireplace is the château's largest. Next to it is the bread oven. The pantry, a low room with intersecting vaults, led to the dining room for the château's servants and the butchery, where the hooks for hanging game and cutting blocks are still visible. The pantry is next to the large vaulted kitchen. Boats bringing supplies up the Cher moored to a landing platform situated under the arches, to quickly deliver goods at any time of the day or night. According to tradition, the landing stage was called the Queen's Bath, then Diane's Bath.



FRANÇOIS I'S BEDROOM

Marked by grace

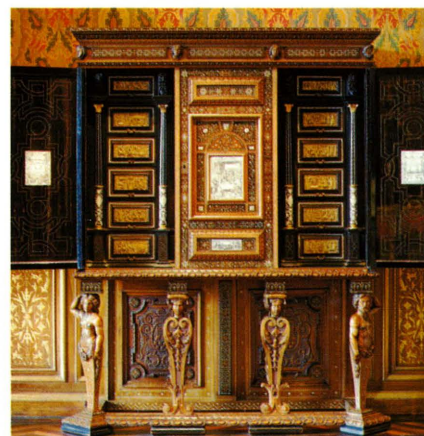


The doorframe, which matches the neo-Gothic style of the so-called François I fireplace (see page 27), is decorated with the coat of arms of Thomas Bohier. Several of the paintings celebrate feminine grace and beauty.

François I owned Chenonceau for twelve years (from 1535 to March 31, 1547). He loved it, of course, and wanted to have “this lovely site and home in the midst of such beautiful, attractive countryside,” but there was no woman or mistress on hand to bring to life the soul of this “Château des Dames.” It remained a hunting lodge, surrounded by lush forests, although the king rarely spent much time there. The memory of the previous owner was still fresh: Thomas Bohier’s motto is on the fireplace, with his coat of arms above the door, framed by two mermaids.

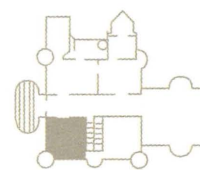
The décor consists of Renaissance pilasters and foliate scrolls, but the niches have lost their sculptures. Next to it stands a magnificent sixteenth-century Italian cabinet, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and engraved ivory, a gift for the marriage of François II and Marie Stuart on April 24, 1558.

The Three Graces by Van Loo (see page 36) shares the walls with two interpretations of the same theme: the portrait of Diane de Poitiers by Primaticcio (see page 31) and Gabrielle d’Estrées, a favorite of Henri IV, by Ambroise Dubois.



The cabinet, with several drawers on the façade and inlaid with mother-of-pearl and engraved ivory, is typical of the Florentine Renaissance style.

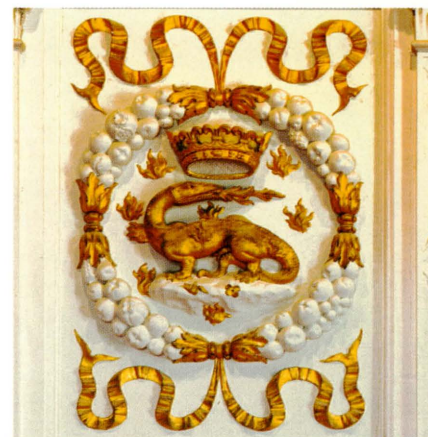
Souvenir of a royal visit



A well-known canvas by Rubens, *Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist*, hangs on the wall. It was purchased in 1889 at the sale of Joseph Bonaparte's collection. The gleaming gilding in this room celebrates the Sun King. The initials of Katherine Brignonnet and Thomas Bohier run along a frieze at the top of the wall.

The "red room," as it is also sometimes called, evokes Louis XIV's visit to Chenonceau on July 14, 1650. During his second visit, the Sun King offered his ceremonial portrait by Hyacinthe Rigaud (see page 35) to his uncle, the Duc de Vendôme, as well as the furniture and chairs, covered in Aubusson tapestries. The fireplace is decorated with the salamander and the ermine, the heraldic animals of King François and Queen Claude de France. The salamander is an important animal in heraldry; it is characterized by ability to resist fire. The ermine, on

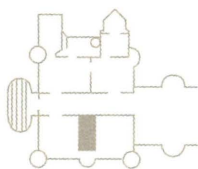
the other hand, symbolizes purity. This room has a French-style ceiling, made even more beautiful by a lovely collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century portraits: *Christ Child and Saint John the Baptist* by the Flemish painter Pierre Paul Rubens (see page 30), the *Portrait of Louis XV* by Carle van Loo, and the *Portrait of the Princesse de Rohan* by Jean-Marc Nattier and the *Portrait of Madame Dupin*, also by Nattier placed right next to her father, a banker for Louis XIV, *Samuel Bernard*, by Nicolas Mignard.



As Pliny the Elder wrote: "The salamander is so cold that it puts out fire when it touches it"; this glorified the majesty and power of the king of France.

STAIRCASE

The revolution of the straight staircase

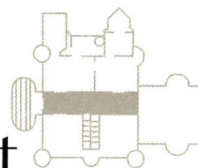


The staircase leads to the chateau's two upper floors, each separated by a hall, the central device leading to the rooms.

Access to the upper floor was via one of the first straight—or “banister on banister”—staircases built in France. It was modeled on the Italian design, and left the spiral staircase behind. This staircase was one of the architectural innovations that Thomas Bohier brought back from Italy. It is covered with a pitch vault, whose coffers are formed by a system of ribs intersecting at right angles and decorated with human figures, fruit and flowers. Certain figures, viewed as religious, were vandalized during the Revolution. The staircase turns at a landing forming a balustraded loggia with a magnificent view of the Cher. The keystone is crowned with a foliate motif.

KATHERINE BRIÇONNET'S HALL

The manor's first builder

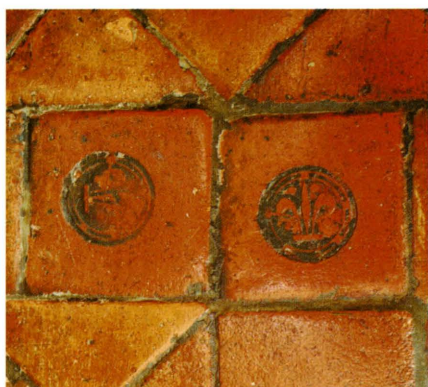
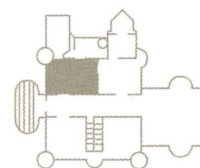


Decorated with a “French-style” ceiling, the room is tiled with small terracotta tiles stamped with a fleur-de-lis crossed by a dagger.

Galba, a Roman emperor whose rule was short-lived (68-69), is represented in profile with a laurel wreath.

A series of marble medallions that Catherine de Médicis brought back from Italy are arranged above the doors. They represent Roman emperors: Galba, Claudius, Germanicus, Vitellius and Nero. These are the only remaining trace of the countless antiques with which Catherine de Médicis decorated the chateau. Six seventeenth-century Audenarde tapestries represent hunting and picnic scenes; they were made from cartoons by Adam-François van der Meulen (1632-1690), a painter originally from Brussels who specialized in hunting and battle scenes. Audenarde, a small Belgian town, had been a major tapestry-producing center since the fifteenth century. In 1668, the town became part of France.

Catherine de Médicis' daughters and daughter-in-laws



The reddish-orange ceramic tiles are stamped with the royal fleur-de-lis pattern.

This bedroom is a tribute to the two daughters and three daughter-in-laws of Catherine de Médicis: Queen Margot, Elisabeth de France, Marie Stuart, Elisabeth of Austria and Louise de Lorraine, whose coat of arms decorates the ceiling. The walls are covered with a series of sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries depicting biblical and mythological scenes: *Siege of Troy*, *Kidnapping of Helen*, *Circus Games in the Coliseum* and *The Crowning of King David*. The composition reflects the Renaissance style through the use of perspective and antique references, while the trees are still in a medieval style. Above the credenza, near the window, is Pierre Paul Rubens' *Adoration of the Magi* (see page 37). Above the other credenza, near Diane's garden, is a *Portrait of the Duchesse d'Olonne*, painted by Mignard. Henriette, daughter of the Baron de La Loupe, married Louis de Trémoille, Comte d'Olonne in 1652. The poet Jean Loret wrote about her on her wedding day, March 3, 1652: "*D'Olonne aspire à l'hyménée / De la belle Loupe l'ainée / Et l'on croit que dans peu de jours / Ils jouiront de leurs amours.*"

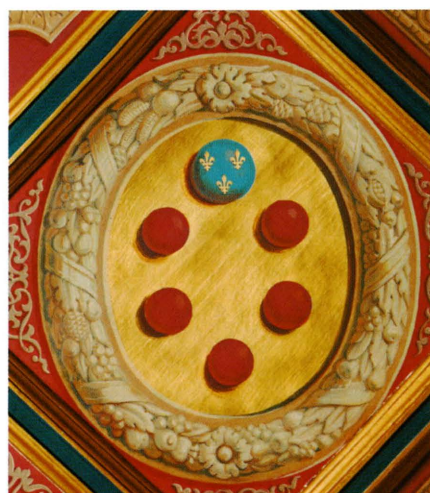
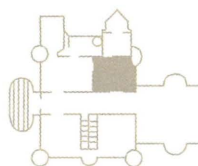


This bed, like all those in the château, is raised to move it higher off the cold floor. The chest next to the simple Renaissance fireplace is a nod to the itinerant life of the lords, who traveled from château to château, taking their furniture with them.



CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS' BEDROOM

The influence of the Florentine Médicis



The Médicis blazon, which decorates several of the coffers on the ceiling, was modified for the two queens of France, Catherine and Marie de Médicis. The circle at the top, placed above the five red circles, is painted with fleur-de-lis.



The edge of the tapestry to the left of Catherine's bed is decorated lavishly. A wreath of fruit baskets includes an allegory of strength, a peacock and this crayfish, a reference to the fable *The Crayfish and the Oyster*.

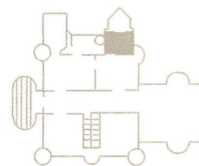
Catherine de Médicis' room has a square, painted and gilded coffered wood ceiling, created in the nineteenth century. The compartments have a number of initials: in the center, the intertwined and crowned letters for Catherine and Henri II, C and H; Henri's initials along; the two Cs for Catherine; along with the F for François I and the A for Anne de Bretagne. The E could refer to Eleonore of Austria, the sister of Charles V and François I's second wife. The other coffers are decorated with carved foliage motifs, similar to the elements on the carved ceiling of the Green study.

The canopy bed in the middle of the room is characteristic of the Renaissance style, and is decorated with reliefs featuring multiple carved motifs: friezes, pilasters and profile portraits inspired from antique medallions. The structure of the bed can be dismantled, as it is held together by dowels—necessary to

accommodate the itinerant life of a medieval lord who moved from one château to another. By the sixteenth century, the bed had become a ceremonial object, used to display wealth and sumptuous fabrics. The curtains could close to protect the sleeper from drafts; at the time, people slept sitting up, not reclining—hence the small size of these beds.

The furniture and tapestries in the room date from the sixteenth century. Produced in Flanders (present-day Belgium), a major tapestry-producing region since the fifteenth century, these works illustrate a biblical theme, with scenes from Samson's life. They include remarkable elements, such as the border with animals symbolizing proverbs (Skill is greater than Cunning) and fables (*The Crayfish and the Oyster*). Next to the bed is a painting on wood by Correggio depicting *The Education of Cupid* (see page 34).

PRINT COLLECTION ROOM



The mirror on the eighteenth-century fireplace reflects the second exhibition room.

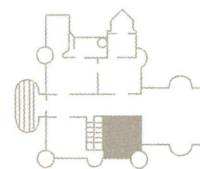


This room has the château's only painted ceiling, an eighteenth-century allegory.

Catherine de Médicis' room leads to two small apartments that house the print collection. It displays a complete and diverse collection of drawings, engravings and prints representing the château during different periods, from the fifteenth century and Diane de Poitiers—with a lovely red chalk drawing—to the nineteenth century. It covers the major phases in the construction of Chenonceau, the tastes of the various owners and the creation of the gardens. The first room has an elegant eighteenth century fireplace.

CÉSAR DE VENDÔME'S BEDROOM

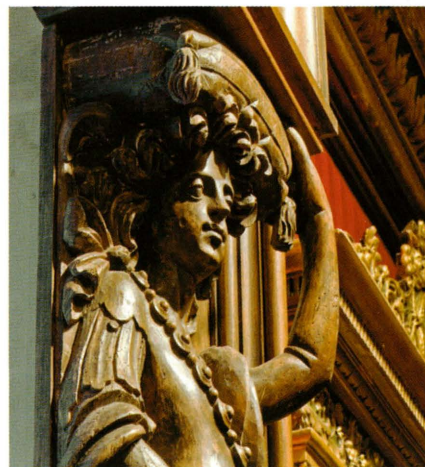
The legitimized son of Gabrielle d'Estrées and Henri IV



The fireplace in César de Vendôme's bedroom was painted in the nineteenth century and is decorated with the coat of arms of Thomas Bohier. The room combines tapestries, paneling and furniture, creating a cosy ambience.

This room evokes the memory of César de Vendôme (1594-1665), the son of King Henri IV and his favorite, Gabrielle d'Estrées. He was initially given this château by Louise de Lorraine as a gift for his wedding to Françoise de Lorraine, via an act dated October 15, 1598. Yet a certain number of Catherine de Médicis creditors (who were owed 96,300 *livres*) did not ratify the transaction, which annulled the donation from Queen Louise. Marie de Luxembourg took care of the situation, and César de Vendôme finally inherited the château

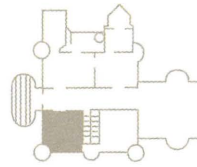
in 1624. Two large, seventeenth-century wooden caryatids frame the bedroom window. This structure is not an architectural element and conceals part of the cornice frieze decorated with canons. They are called caryatids in reference to the Erechtheum sculptures on the Acropolis in Athens. The walls are covered with a series of three seventeenth-century Brussels tapestries illustrating the ancient myth of Demeter and Persephone, worshipped in Greek mythology as a symbol of the seasons. The fireplace is decorated with the coat of arms of Thomas Bohier.



The column was replaced by a caryatid; the abacus (the square structure atop a capital), is here a cushion.

GABRIELLE D'ESTRÉES' BEDROOM

The favorite and her tragic fate



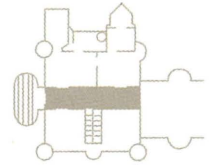
This bedroom illustrates the developing style of the canopy bed; the fabric no longer completely wraps around the bed. The canopy has been shortened.

Gabrielle d'Estrées—Henri IV's lovely favorite who met a tragic fate (she died in 1599 while pregnant and in her twenties, a victim of a sudden illness or poisoning)—never had an opportunity to live at Chenonceau. The walls of this room are lined with a rare series of Brussels tapestries known as *The Lucas Months*. The cartoons were drawn either by Lucas de Leyde or Lucas van Nevele. They are named for the supposed designer of the original sixteenth-century tapestry, Flemish artist Lucas Cornelis or Lucas de Olanda.



This tapestry represents the month of July, depicting a woman on horseback, falcon hunting.

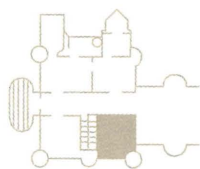
SECOND FLOOR HALL



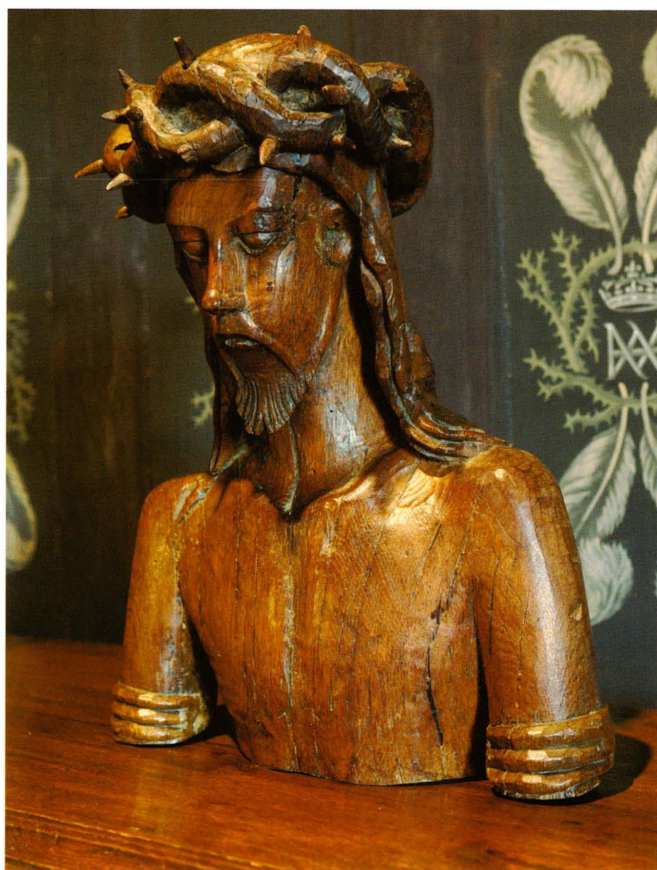
The vault over the hall illustrates the restoration conducted by Marguerite Pelouze with the architect Félix Roguet from 1867 to 1878.

Marguerite Wilson, wife of famous nineteenth-century chemist Théophile Pelouze, purchased Chenonceau from Mme Dupin's heirs. She hired the architect Félix Roguet, a disciple of Viollet-le-Duc, to restore the château to Diane's style. She lived here lavishly, as illustrated by a party she organized in 1886 in honor of President Jules Grévy of France. The memory of the moment is recorded in the Neuilly tapestry, which symbolizes the Cher and portrays the gondola Mme Pelouze brought here from Venice.

LOUISE DE LORRAINE'S BEDROOM



A black room for a “white queen”



Everything was designed to keep the “white queen” in a state of meditation and prayer, as illustrated by this bust of Christ with a crown of thorns. The celebrations and lavish lifestyle of Chenonceau were over, and the château became a place of contemplation.

Louise de Lorraine-Vaudémont (1553-1601) reigned over France from 1575 to 1589, after her marriage to Henri III of France on February 15, 1575, at the cathedral of Reims. The young woman was known to be frail and reserved, but she was also fervent in her love for the king as well as in the hunt to find her husband’s murderers. Slightly before her death on January 5, 1589, Catherine de Médicis bequeathed Chenonceau to her

daughter-in-law. Inconsolable after the tragic death of her husband, she transformed Chenonceau into a place of prayer, bringing to the château a community of Capuchin nuns who lived in the attic. The decoration covering the walls, the fabrics and the ceiling reflect her grief: silver teardrops, widows’ cordon, gravediggers’ shovels and the letter lambda, Louise de Lorraine’s initial, intertwined with the H of Henri III. This room is a re-creation of her

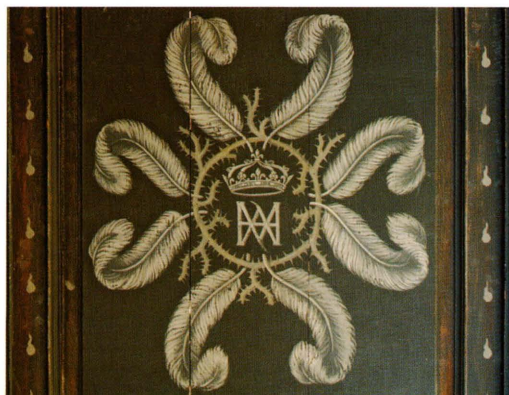
bedroom that was located next to the chapel; it was destroyed during transformations in the nineteenth century. An inventory made after her death noted “a bed of black velvet, black damask curtains with embroidery, carpets and chairs also covered in black velvet.” A door led to the chapel, through which the pious queen could listen to mass from her bed when she was ill. When her health permitted, she attended mass every Saturday





The funereal decoration on the canopy bed evokes the grief of the inconsolable widow.

The square ceiling coffers in the bedroom are decorated with the intertwined and crowned lambda and H, the initials of Louise de Lorraine and Henri III, framed by a crown of thorns. The feathers symbolize the pain of the heart.



in the church of Francueil, according to historian Antoine Malet. Made-moiselle de Montpensier, then ten years old, visited Chenonceau twice in 1637; the funereal look of this bedroom left a very strong impression on her. Louise de Lorraine always wore white, in keeping with the etiquette of royal mourning (for childless queens), hence her name, "the white queen."



The gardens: an ideal landscape

In the 16th century, the enclosed medieval garden was replaced by the structured garden of the





architecture

Italian Renaissance. It became a place for celebrations and a symbol of paradise on earth.

A revolution in the art of gardening

VINCENT BOUVET

Art historian



This nineteenth-century engraving portrays a romantic, and somewhat whimsical vision of Chenonceau, with the image of the monumental staircase on the right. It is, however, a historical rendering, with Louise de Lorraine's room still visible on the east façade, right next to the chapel.

In the mid-sixteenth century, garden design in France moved beyond the medieval enclosed garden and the ordered gardens of the Italian Renaissance. It developed an eminently civilized art, featuring a geometric layout divided into sections, where the symmetry underscored the perspective; an association of colors and materials between the topiary and the groves of trees; and parterres (planting beds) and broderie (curling decorative patterns), adorned with statues, fountains and basins. The chateau no longer served a defensive role, so both the building and its gardens became a replica of an ideal paradise on earth. This was described in *Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream*, a work by an Italian humanist translated into French in 1546, and in Bernard Palissy's *Recepte Véritable*, first printed in 1563. The garden played a preponderant role in the Renaissance, due to the availability of plans and models through engravings, a fashion for Antiquity among artists and humanist scholars, and the appearance of new plants, discovered in the Americas.

Lines of trees marked the boundary between the pleasure gardens and the rest of nature. Beyond the formal garden and the hunting grounds, the forests and the fields contributed to the economic prosperity of the properties.

From the favorite to the queen mother

We know what the Chenonceau gardens looked like during the second half of the sixteenth century through books published by Jacques I Androuet du Cerceau, his *Plus Excellents Bastiments de France* (1576 to 1579). His bird's-eye drawings are extremely precise, although it is not always possible to distinguish between projects actually completed and those in planning stages.

In 1547, when Diane de Poitiers received Chenonceau as a gift, it had a modest medieval garden that included both the kitchen garden and the orchard. From 1551 to 1553, the royal mistress created most of the current garden that bears her name, which involved considerable masonry and horticultural work, supervised by Philibert Delorme. He was in charge of the royal gardens and pavilions, and also worked at Diane's chateau in Anet. Open-air gaming spaces were created on the grounds, such as a ring-catch race, paille-maille and jeu de paume (precursors to croquet and tennis, respectively).

In 1559, on the death of Henri II, a triumphant Catherine de Médicis took Chenonceau from her rival. Starting in 1563, the queen, who wanted to make of Chenonceau "a small house ... to include gardens and other pleasures," had the gardens transformed according to plans for the ideal garden as described by Bernard Palissy.



*Vue du Château de Chenonceaux
Sur Cher en Touraine prise de la Prairie de l'Inde.*

The “curio” garden, the original garden that is now named for the queen, located below the forecourt and the Marques Tower, was laid out according to a very simple plan. Two wide alleys crossed diagonally, forming four large triangles, each of which were again divided into triangular sections via two other crossed alleys. An aviary, a menagerie, a sheepfold, an artificial grotto and the Rocher fountain were placed among the shrubs, climbing plants and flowerbeds. The Francueil garden along the left bank of the Cher was created on the riverbank, with two vast square parterres on each side of an alley leading to an amphitheater of greenery, where grottoes and fountains were created on the hillside.

Engraving illustrating life on the left bank of the Cher, with Diane de Poitiers' gardens to the right.

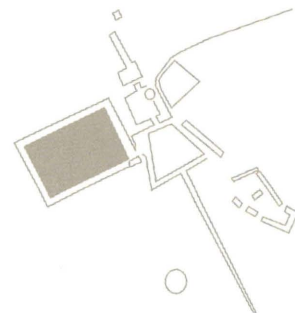
From the Ancien Régime to today

After a number of setbacks, the property was sold to the financier Claude Dupin in 1733. With his immense fortune, he was able to modernize the château and restore the gardens. He reinforced the moats and removed the Diane and Catherine fountains. In the nineteenth century, the Villeneuve family transformed the grounds into an English-style garden. Then, in conjunction with a complete restoration of the château by architect Félix Roguet, the Pelouze-Wilson family restructured the parterres, notably Diane's, recreated the alleys and redesigned the maze in the Parc de Chisseaux.

When Gaston Menier set up a military hospital in the château in 1914, the gardens were turned into vegetable plots to feed the wounded and the medical staff. The spring on the left bank of the Cher, called the “Henri III fountain,” supplied water. In 1951, M. and Mme Hubert Menier hired Bernard Voisin, an agronomist, to run the property; together, they began to restore the château and the Diane and Catherine gardens—which had been destroyed when the Cher flooded in 1940 and by the presence of successive military troops—to reclaim the 120-hectare grounds and start a farming operation again, notably by planting 30 hectares of vineyards.

DIANE DE POITIERS'S GARDEN

From a medieval vegetable plot to Renaissance order



The construction work for the parterre, begun in 1551, cost Diane a great deal of money: 3,055 *livres*. She brought trees here from the most beautiful gardens in the Touraine region, some of which arrived by the river—as “the technique of raising trees in nursery was barely in use at this time.”

The rectangular Diane de Poitiers garden borders the moat; strong retaining walls protect it from the floodwaters of the Cher. It covers 12,000 square meters, and features eight triangles of lawn, with geometric borders of pruned shrubs, yews, spindle trees, boxwood and viburnum, each with curved designs of santolina in the center, a totally of 3,000 meters. The flowerbeds are planted twice a year with 30,000 to 32,000 plants. More than a hundred hibiscus trees bloom in the summer. The central fountain was reconstruct-

ed in 2005 from the one inaugurated in 1577, which Mme Dupin had had removed in the eighteenth century. The water spurts from a large round rock and falls with a splash into a pentagonal basin made of white limestone.

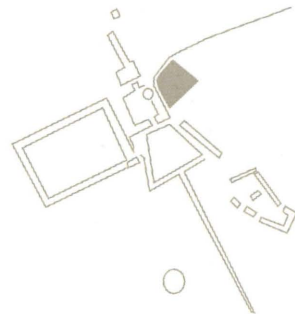
The stone walls surrounding the garden are topped with vases, while the lower walls of the terrace are partially covered with 120 Iceberg climbing roses. A passageway on the southeast side, after the doorway decorated with stone balls, leads over the moats to the woods along the river.



The garden is geometric and structured into compartments, underscored with arabesques and elegant plant broderies.

CATHERINE DE MÉDICIS' GARDEN

Bernard Palissy's ideal garden



Maintaining the gardens and grounds requires a permanent staff of twelve gardeners, who manage the year-round tasks, depending on the seasons: cutting wood, gathering leaves, planting flowers in the beds (which involves planting 130,000 plants), mowing the lawns, and pruning the hedges and shrubs.

This garden, triangular in shape, with irregular side and a surface area of 5,500 square meters, features five sections of lawn along with flowerbeds of 200 roses, which are planted twice a year with 8,000 to 10,000 plants: biennials for the fall planting, and annual and perennials for the summer planting. Forty spheres of boxweed punctuate the lawn sections, along with 1,500 lavender plants. Four of the five lawn sections frame a circular basin, which is 15 meters in diameter, on the location of the Rocher fountain planned

by Bernard Palissy. To supply the water, "Catherine brought Dagrenière spring water via underground canals, at great expense," explained Abbé Chevalier. In addition, Bernard Palissy designed a famous tiled grotto featuring naturalistic and animal designs for the gardens of the château des Tuileries in Paris. To the east, a sloping bed borders the moat, which is filled with water from the Cher. A parterre of climbing ivy on a wooden trellis defines the northern edge of the garden.



There were fewer varieties of flowers in Catherine's time. Daisies and dahlias were added two hundred years ago.





At night, Diane's gardens are illuminated and transfigured. The magical site is enchanting, even more so with the music of Arcangelo Corelli, a master of Italian classicism.

DÔMES BUILDING



The Dômes building is the only one of the structures built from Catherine de Médicis' ambitious project.



The waxworks museum presents the main historical figures linked to the château. Here, Louise de Lorraine at prayer before a crucifix.

The large wing, built of dressed stone with an upper floor attic and dormer windows, stands behind a row of pruned trees. It is framed by two corner pavilions; the central pavilion features a clock and is topped by a small lantern. The roof has an inverted hull-shape design. This is the only completed structure, built from 1580 to 1586, from Catherine de Médicis' "grand plan." Designed to house the queen mother's staff, as well as stables, it is now a waxworks museum.

VEGETABLE GARDEN AND FARM



The buildings of the sixteenth-century farm now house the château's administrative offices.



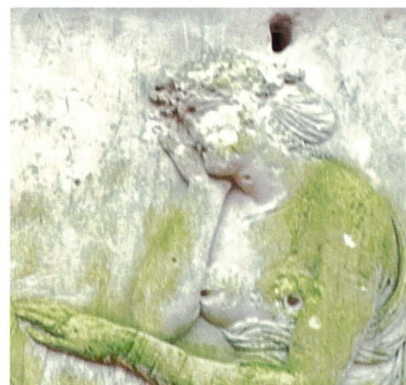
Special care is taken to keep the château filled with flower arrangements, according to themes that vary with the seasons and special events.

This garden is over one hectare in size, with twelve beds lined with 240 apple trees and 220 rose trees. It provides more than 100 varieties of cut flowers used as floral decorations in the château. Wicker birdhouses hang along the alleys of the vegetable garden. Two sculptures are exhibited in the court-yard of the sixteenth-century farm: a *Ménine* by Manolo Valdés (a tribute to and reinterpretation of Diego Velázquez's painting) and a *Poisson paysage* by François-Xavier Lalanne, both from artists' exhibitions held at Chenonceau.

CENOTAPH



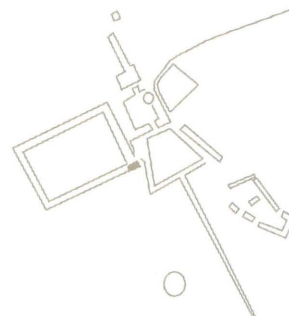
Louise Dupin's tomb was inspired from the tomb of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the Parc d'Ermenonville (Oise).



The cenotaph is a tribute to the virtues of Mme Dupin, who supported the Enlightenment and was well loved by the people who lived on her estate.

Philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who encouraged a return to nature, tutored the Dupin's son for a time. He named one of the alleys in the Chenonceau park on the right bank of the Cher, "Sylvie." In the middle of one of the clearings stands Mme Dupin's cenotaph, placed on a step and resting on lions' paws; it is designed as an antique tomb with bas-reliefs and acroteria on the corners. It illustrates the picturesque style that swept late-eighteenth century Europe for landscaped gardens.

The steward's house



The sixteenth-century chancellery was also used to house the property's steward, then by the successive curators. Today, this exceptional setting hosts occasional prestigious—and sometimes royal—guests.

The slate, as opposed to tile, roof indicates the importance of this building, home to the estate's steward. This trusted employee provided annual reports on the property's management, including income (farm rent, tithes, fines, various taxes, vineyards, grains, poultry, dried fruit and nuts, firewood, hay and so on), and expenses (wages, upkeep expenses, farming expenditure, gifts). The 1547 account books, during Diane de Poitiers' era, show that the property was well managed and productivity was increasing. Yet the

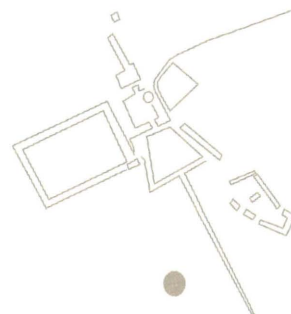
profits were never enough to complete all the renovation projects planned for the château and the gardens. Royal munificence was necessary, added to the generous income and benefits the favorite received. Later, political events forced Catherine to abandon her "grand plan." Profits from the domain went entirely into the pockets of the successive owners, until the property was acquired by M. Dupin, who put into practice the theories of the Enlightenment philosophers.



The chancellery is laid out as a one-floor pavilion made of dressed stone, with two attic floors, along with two tall brick and stone chimneys adding height to its design.

MAZE AND CARYATIDS

An initiatory quest



A "paille-maille game was added next to this maze. Jeu de paume was extremely popular at the time, and there was also piquerie, as the Duchesse de Valentinois, a rider as skilled as Catherine de Médicis, liked to chase the ring," explained Abbé Chevalier.

The circular maze, formed of 2,000 yew trees, 1.3 meters high, covers one hectare of land. Created in the 1990s, it reproduces the maze that Catherine de Médicis intended to build. Visitors enter this initiatory path via one of the five entrances, only two of which lead to the gazebo in the center. Topped with a statue of Venus, the gazebo is made of iroko, an exotic and extremely durable wood that turns gray as it ages. Willows cover its arches. Nearby, the trunk of a cedar tree with a Corinthian capital supports a statue of a nymph

holding Bacchus as a child. This is a partial replica of the tree-column drawing by Philibert Delorme in his work, *Le Premier Tome de l'architecture*, published in 1567. The 70 arches of the circular hedge all around the edge of the clearing are adorned with vases filled with boxwood and ivy.

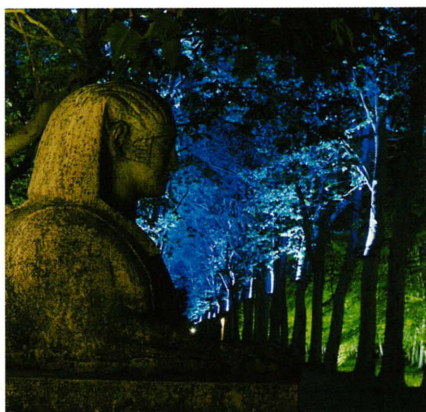
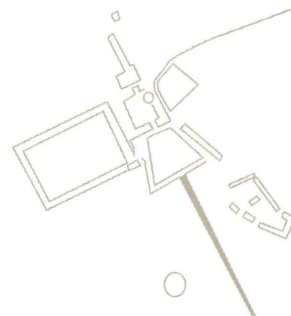
To the east are the monumental atalantas and caryatids by Jean Goujon that once decorated the château's north façade, and which were placed here by Mme Pelouze in 1867. The caryatids were on the upper floor, the atalantas on the ground floor.



Jean Goujon's caryatids and atalantas that adorned the façade—Pallas and Cybele, Hercules and Apollo—were brought together in this structure and placed behind the maze.

ALLEY OF PLANE TREES

A cathedral of greenery

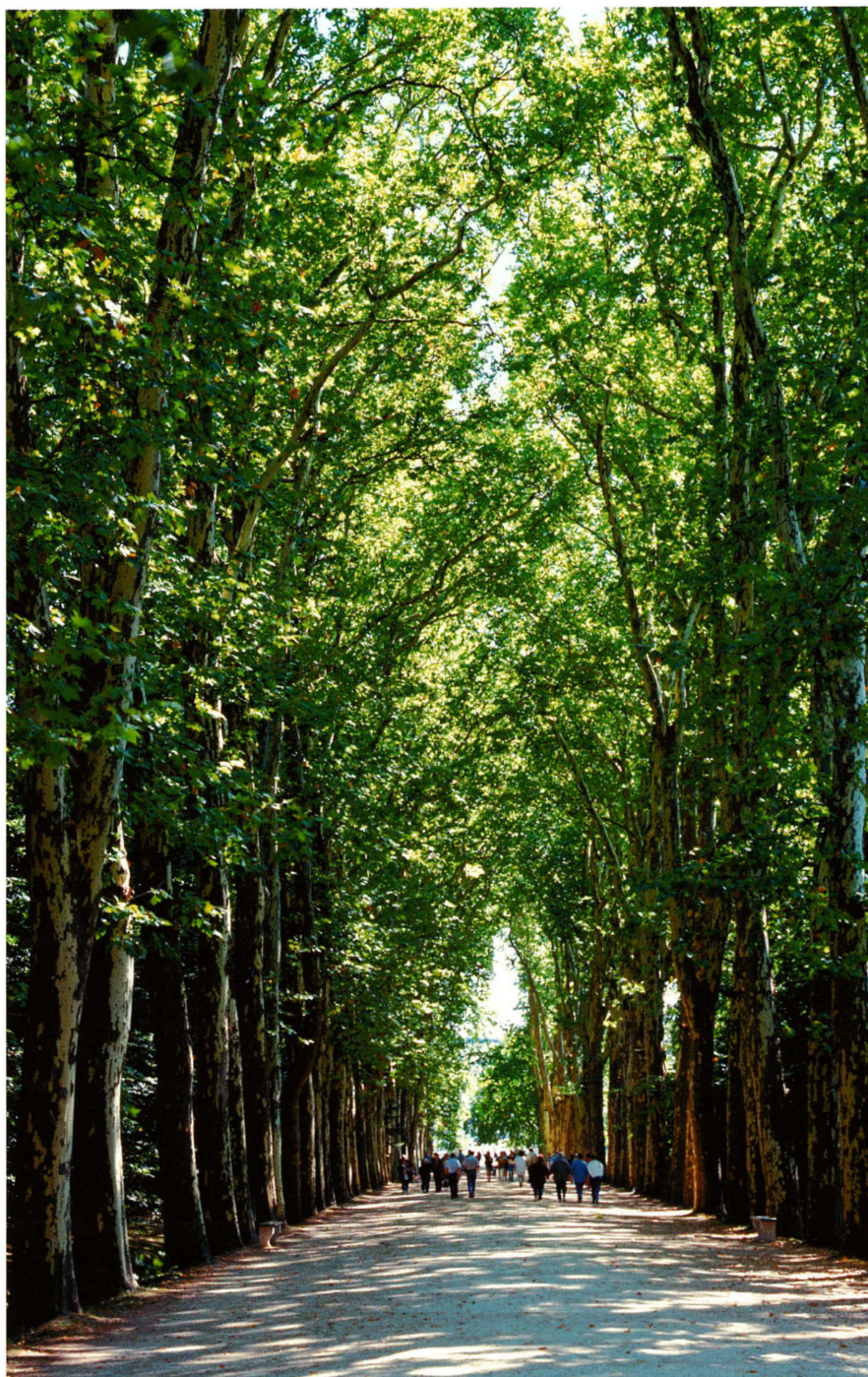


The sphinxes, from the château de Chanteloup, stand at the entrance to the forecourt. They illustrate the Egyptomania that swept through the decorative arts.

Like a cathedral of greenery, a main avenue lined with plane trees stretches nearly one kilometer. In the early nineteenth century, these tall trees replaced the elms planted by M. Dupin, which were used as a building material.

The pair of seventeenth-century sphinxes comes from the château de Chanteloup, near Amboise, the former château of the Duc de Choiseul. The avenue leads to the forecourt, lined with climbing roses, or, depending on the season, a line of boxes filled with yews and lemon trees.

The two large formal French gardens of Chenonceau extend on either side of the Marques Towers: to the left, Diane de Poitiers' garden; and to the right, Catherine de Médicis' garden. Catherine continued planting white mulberry trees, first introduced at Chenonceau in 1554 by Diane. The Florentine created a silkworm farm and set up a silk filature at the château des Houdes, near Francueil. In 1740, M. Dupin relaunched this abandoned silk farm.



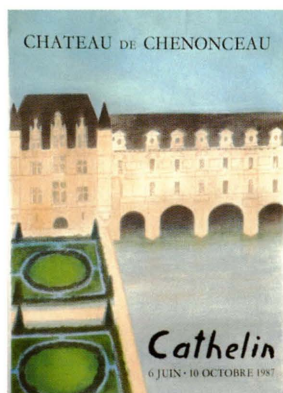
The common plane tree, known as the London plane, is a very popular tree that has lined many roads since Napoleon I. The planes here, which are about 150 years, play an ornamental role prefiguring the magnificence of the gardens.

Contemporary art exhibitions

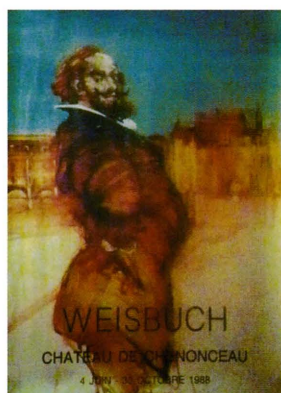
Every summer for the past 30 years, Chenonceau has invited a contemporary artist to exhibit in the upper gallery, which is closed to the public the rest of the year. This artistic patronage is also a unique opportunity to discover contemporary art outside of galleries and museums, and to reach an international audience. The artists created a personal vision of the château for the poster.



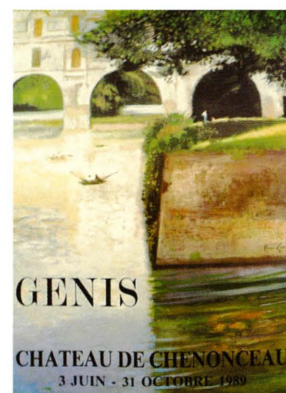
André Brasilier
Celebrated thirty years after his first gallery exhibition, Brasilier's work is a hymn to femininity and harmony.



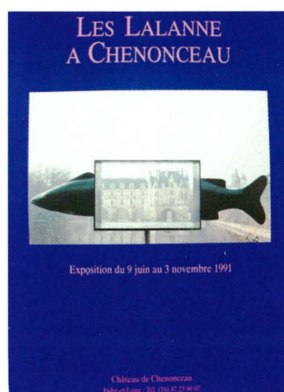
Bernard Cathelin
Bernard Cathelin is an artist of light, who uses large flat areas to make the strong colors of the south vibrate on the canvas.



Claude Weisbuch
Weisbuch is a master of line, which he uses in a dynamic, baroque style, in a range of seria tones.



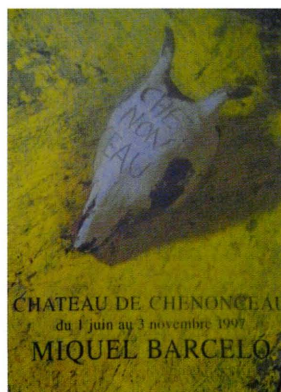
René Genis
The painter specializes in still-lifes and landscapes, and belongs to the school of poetic reality.



The Lalannes
The imaginary world of Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne is populated with sculptures of animals: sheep's, fish, rhinoceroses.



Bernard Buffet
A popular artist par excellence, Bernard Buffet is internationally loved by the public—as far as Japan, which has a museum devoted to his works.



Miquel Barceló
Miquel Barceló uses materials from the earth, and is strongly influenced by Africa and Mali.



Alexandre Fassianos
Fassianos describes a utopian world where the gods of Parnassus never left the earth and are our contemporaries.

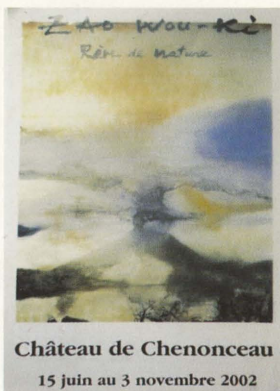


< Pierre-Yves Trémois exhibition

In 2004, the walls of the upper walls exhibited the works of Pierre-Yves Trémois, a painter, engraver and sculptor. "I was drawing before I learned how to write; and while I know why I write, I still don't why I draw."

List of exhibitions and dates

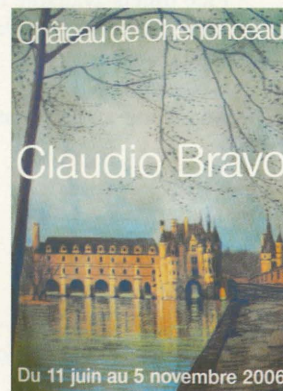
André Brasilier, 2010
The UNESCO collection, 2009
Olivier Debré, 2008
Pat Andrea, 2007
Claudio Bravo, 2006
Manolo Valdés, 2005
Pierre-Yves Trémois, 2004
Zao Wou-Ki, 2002
Mario Rossello, 2000
Jiri Georg Dokoupil, 1999
Enzo Cucchi, 1998
Miquel Barceló, 1997
Julian Schnabel, 1996
Pierre Lesieur, 1994
Bernard Buffet, 1993
Dimitri Mytaras, 1992
Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne, 1991
Pierre Boncompain, 1990
René Genis, 1989
Claude Weisbuch, 1988
Bernard Cathelin, 1987
Guy Bardonne, 1986
Alexandre Fassianos, 1985
André Brasilier, 1980



Zao Wou-Ki
Zao Wou-Ki has successfully created a subtle synthesis between traditional Chinese painting and European abstraction.



Manolo Valdés
Valdés has drawn inspiration from the work of Velázquez, Picasso and Matisse to develop his own imagery.



Claudio Bravo
This craftsman has only a single religion: that of work, perseverance and passion, in the service of beauty.



Pat Andrea
Pat Andrea created a series of works inspired from *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* by Lewis Carroll.



A publication
BEAUX ARTS / TTM EDITIONS
 3, carrefour de Weiden
 92130 Issy-les-Moulineaux
 FRANCE
 Phone +33 (0)1 41 08 38 00
 Fax +33 (0)1 41 08 38 49
 www.beauxartsmagazine.com
 RCS Paris B 435 355 896

CHAIRMAN

Thierry Taittinger

PUBLISHER

Claude Pommereau

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTOR

Marion de Flers

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Stéphanie Ploda

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Lisa Davidson

GRAPHIC CREATION

Xavier Henry

PICTURE EDITOR

Florelle Guillaume

WITH THE COLLABORATION OF

Amélie Amiel, Vincent Bouvet,
 Jean des Cars*, Frédéric Delahaye,
 Armelle Fénelat, Claude Pommereau
 (*) Author of *La véritable histoire des Châteaux de
 la Loire* (Plon, 2009). Most recent book: *La saga
 des Habsbourg* (Perrin, 2010).

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE FOR THEIR VALUABLE ASSISTANCE

Nathalie Renou, Dominique Nicier,
 Yveline Galand, Françoise Morier,
 Caroline Darrasse, Lise Bourdin,
 Ingrid Moulin, Arnaud de Saint-Jouan,
 Jean-Luc Mahot, Pascal Genisson,
 Brieuc Segalen, Laure Menier.

ISBN

978-2-84278-871-1

LEGAL DEPOSIT

May 2011

PHOTOENGRAVING

Litho Art New (Turin)

Printed in France

DISTRIBUTION

Flammarion Diffusion

commandescients@union-distribution.fr

Tél. : 01 41 80 20 20

OTHER BOOKSHOPS

Florence Hanappe

Tél. : 01 41 08 38 06

MAIL ORDER

DIP - Beaux Arts magazine

18-24, quai de la Marne • 75164 Paris

Cedex 19 - FRANCE • 01 44 84 80 38

© Beaux Arts éditions / TTM Éditions, 2011

© Montmorency, musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau.
 © Direction des musées de France, 2009. Photo Laure
 Querouil. Painting acquired with the support of the
 Fonds Régional d'Acquisition pour les Musées et du
 Conseil Général: p.9 • © Bertrand Rieger: pp.2, 20-
 21, 60-61, p.64 (bottom), p.68 (middle, top and
 bottom) • © Photo Marc Jauneaud - Image de Marc:
 pp.4-5, pp.40-41, p. 64 (top), p.65 (bottom), pp.66-67,
 p.69 (top), p.70 (top), p.71 (top), back cover • © Cecil
 Mathieu: p.6, p.43, pp.44-45 (middle and bottom right),
 pp.46-47, p.48 (top), p.49, p.50 (top), p.52 (bottom
 right), p.53 (right), p.54, p.55 (top left), p.56 (bottom),
 p.57 (top right and bottom), pp.58-59, p.65 (top), p.68
 (left, top and bottom), p.69 (bottom) • © Photo Jean-
 Pierre Godeaut: p.10 • © Stevens Frémont: p.17, p.42,
 p.44, p.45 (top right), p.46 (left), p.47 (bottom right),
 p.48 (bottom), p.50 (bottom), p.51, p.52 (left and top
 right), p.53 (top left), p.55 (three images on the right),
 p.56 (top), p.57 (top left), p.58 (left), p.59 (bottom),
 pp.62-63 • © Hervé Champollion / akg-images: p.70
 (bottom) • © Château de Chenonceau: p.10, p.68
 (right, top and bottom), pp.72-73 • © akg / Bildarchiv
 Monheim: p.71 (bottom) • © akg-images / Catherine
 Bibollet: Cover

Visiting Chenonceau

INFORMATION

Château de Chenonceau
 37150 Chenonceaux / France
 Tel.: 0820 20 90 90
 www.chenonceau.com
 info@chenonceau.com

OPENING HOURS

The Château de Chenonceau is open every day, all year round. Hours: 9 am to 8 pm,
 depending on the season.
 Holiday weekends in the spring: 9 am to 7:30 pm.

TOUR

Visitors tour the château at their own pace, with the use of a free brochure or an
 audioguide. Visitors with limited mobility: ground floor of the château and waxworks
 museum.

Brochures available in 15 languages: French, English, German, Italian, Spanish,
 Japanese, Dutch, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, Chinese, Hungarian, Romanian, Czech,
 Korean.

Audio guides available in 11 languages with an iPod Touch: French, English, German,
 Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Dutch, Russian, Portuguese, Polish, Chinese.

FACILITIES

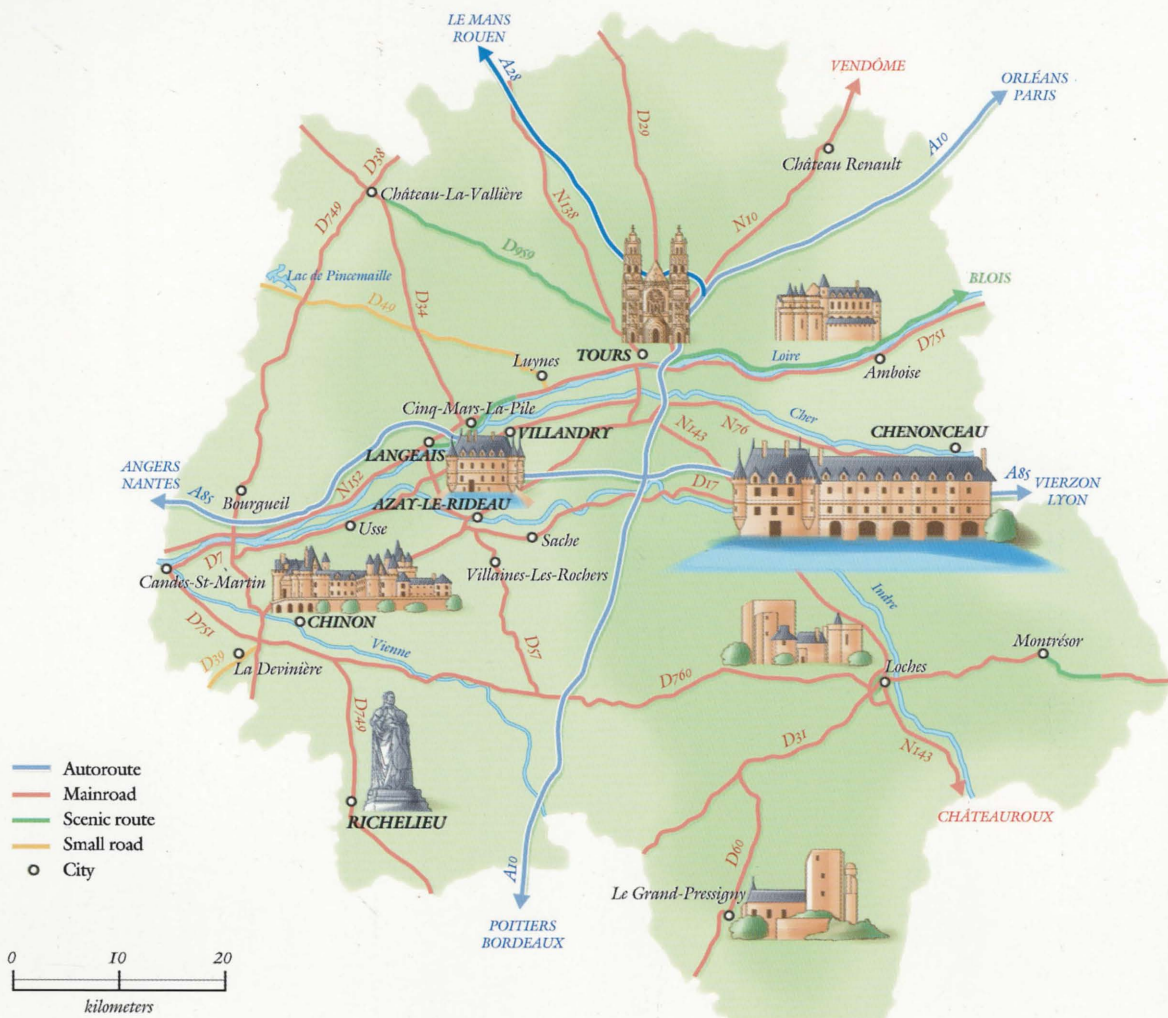
- Picnic areas
- Playground areas
- Baby-changing facilities
- Free toilets
- Free toilets available for visitors with limited mobility
- Free cloakroom and left-luggage area
- Free parking
- Restaurants
- Bookshop and souvenir shop

GETTING THERE

The Château de Chenonceau is located in the Loire Valley, 214 km from Paris, 34 km
 from Tours.

Travel time from Paris:

- 2 hours by car via the autoroute A10 (the Aquitaine), exit Blois or Amboise
- 1 hour by TGV from Paris-Montparnasse train station to Saint-Pierre-des-Corps in Tours
- 1 hour by TGV from Paris-Roissy-CDG airport to Saint-Pierre-des-Corps in Tours
- 25 minutes via TER (bus) from Tours to Chenonceaux.



"I do not know what singular sweetness and aristocratic serenity transpires at the Château de Chenonceau. It is some way from the village that remains respectfully at a distance. It appears at the end of a long avenue of trees, surrounded by woods, framed in a vast garden with beautiful lawns. Built on the water, in the air, its turrets, its square chimneys soar. The Cher flows below, and ripples at the base of the arches, their sharp edges breaking the flow. It is peaceful and gentle, elegant and sturdy. Its calm is anything but boring; its melancholy has no bitterness."

Gustave Flaubert

Voyage en Bretagne, par les champs et par les grèves, 1847



9€

ISBN : 978-2-84278-871-1



9 782842 788711